



Chairman's Tête-à-Tête

Hello again everyone for the last time this year.

What a wonderful evening we had with the London Welsh Rugby Club Choir on Monday and so lovely to see nearly a hundred of you with us. The boys were in fine voice and their stories as amusing as ever, this was put together to make up for not having their concert in the summer or our annual Celebration of Carols. It was such a shame we missed out on our Centenary Carols but let's look forward to a better year for all in 2021 when we can truly celebrate our one hundredand one years. As my mother used to say good things come to those who wait.

I hope also you'll enjoy reading the memories of Christmas in this bumper edition of the WI Hive, there are some beautiful stories and thank you to all who've shared them with us. I think Winston Churchill summed up the idea of remembering this season very well when he said *Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection.*

It just leaves me now to wish you all a very *Happy, Peaceful and Safe Christmas* and all good things for 2021 when we will all meet again.

With love Julie Higgins, Federation Chairman

Merry Christmas from the WI Office

2020 has been a very unusual year, we've missed our members piling into Park Farm for a craft workshop or just stopping by the office for a chat, but as always it has been a pleasure to work with and for you all. Let's hope 2021 is the year we can get back together for an eagerly awaited cuppa and catch up. Not forgetting the cake!

We'll be back in the WI Office from 9am on Wednesday 6 January, but until then we would like to wish all our members a very happy and safe Christmas ♥

Rachel Hows, Federation Secretary
& Rachel Sparks, Financial Assistant



2021 EVENTS

Don't forget to join us again in the New Year for our online events.

Tuesday 12 January, 2pm
Suffolk Wildlife Trust with Michael Strand

Tuesday 19 January, 7.30pm
La Route des Grands Alps with Sue Beavan

Thursday 21 January, 7.30pm
Make a Mini Scrapbook with Margaret Brackenbury

Wednesday 27 January, 7.30pm
Theatre Royal Reimagined with Colin Blumenau

Tickets are **£5 per person**. Book using our Eventbrite page [here](#) or contact the WI Office on office.swfwi@gmail.com



Office Information

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Reg. Charity Number: 1179294

The WI Office is closed from 4pm Thursday 17 December until 9am Wednesday 6 January.

Don't forget you can follow us on social media by clicking the icons below



Christmas Past

WI members share their
treasured Christmas memories

My Swiss Christmas In 1970 my sister married a Swiss and moved to Fallenden on Lake Greifensee, near Zurich. In the thirty years after that we went out there for Christmas on a number of occasions. We would either fly to the airport or take the train via Paris and Basle. The train journey was a bit of an adventure in December as the cross channel ferry could be rough. Then overnight through to Switzerland, where at Basle we had to leave the train go through passport control and get back on the same train again. Then by car to her village and on to her flat.

There was usually a small Christmas market on in the centre of the village. The shops and the main street would be decorated with white lights. The street lights had all been sponsored by various local businesses and residents and were very pretty. The flat was not usually decorated when we arrived as the Christmas tree and decorations were all done on Christmas Eve. During the morning on Christmas Eve my brother in law would go out up to the local woods and choose which tree he wanted and get it cut down and he would bring it back to the flat. The tree was then decorated with the usual baubles and then with the tree candles. Real candles were allowed there, and they looked very attractive but to us they were always a worry. After a special dinner the presents were then handed around and opened and you were lucky to get to bed before midnight.

Christmas Day was to either church or on a walk or both, followed by a full Christmas dinner, most often duck rather than turkey. This usually included a traditional English Christmas pudding which my mother or I would make and take out there. The afternoon could be visiting friends or another walk. The following day was often an excursion to the zoo or up one of the cable cars to a restaurant at the top of the hill. Zurich is surrounded by hills so there was always somewhere to go and always a restaurant at the top.

Most years we didn't get snow but one year was different and although we still went out we had to have snow chains fitted to the car tyres. The Swiss authorities did not want salt on the roads because of

the damage it does to the cars so winter tyres were a necessity.

One thing we often missed was the new year eve celebration which was a big thing. The block of flats where my sister lived had a big room in the basement where all the residents would get together and have a party. This always seemed to finish off the Christmas season well.

These Christmases were very different to the childhood ones of my sister and I. As children money was always tight so my mother had to be quite inventive. One year they bought day old chicks and raised them in the back garden so we could have a roast chicken for Christmas and our relatives could have a chicken as a present. Thanks to my mother's careful planning and budgeting we got to see Santa Claus at the local departmental store, had Christmas stockings to hang up on Christmas Eve plus family presents on the day itself. Stockings always had a tangerine wrapped in tissue in the toe then often a colouring book and pencils, a pretty tin of toffees and a small present. One year I remember it was a small teddy bear just five inches tall, which I still have today. Christmas Day was for playing with our stocking presents as opening family presents had to wait until after lunch so my mother could sit down and enjoy it too.

The day had its rituals, starting with breakfast usually cold ham and boiled eggs. Then my mother had the job of jiggling all the components of our lunch to get cooked in our tiny kitchen. Christmas lunch was a big meal and dad and us girls did the washing up as quickly as possible as only then could we open the family presents. Boxing Day morning was for writing our thank you letters. A task we disliked but there was no choice but to do them. Later that day was for relatives, either them visiting us or us visiting them. They were not big Christmases not more than six or seven of us, compared to my father's Christmases when he was a boy. There were several families who lived close together so there could be more than twenty at their Christmas lunch.

Brenda Last, SWFWI Treasurer (Stanton WI)

An unexpected Guest... Christmas Day 2018 is one which my husband and I will not forget! Just before 8am my husband said "come and look out of the kitchen window. There seems to be a strange animal on the grass between the fence and the drive." It was a cold morning with a hoar frost on the shrubs, grass and fence and on the grass was a dark coloured animal.

We had a discussion as to what it could be – we live by a farm complex with fields on three sides of our garden. We ruled out our cat (in the lounge), a mink deer and then it moved and was struggling to get its legs out of the fence. My husband went outside to see what it was – a Wallaby!!! We later discovered that there were several living wild in the area. It was trapped by its back legs in our wire fence. We cut it free but it was clearly injured and unable to stand. What do you do with an injured Wallaby, especially on Christmas day?

Our neighbours on the farm came to see what was happening and managed to get it into a puppy cage, but because they have 4 dogs were unable to have it in their house so it was placed in our hallway. I'm sure you can imagine the response you get when you ring up a vet to say that you have an injured Wallaby! They would look at it if we drove 20 miles to the surgery which was open. Unfeasible – how do two people in their 70's put a large puppy cage into a small car! We spent Christmas day and night with our unexpected guest.

On Boxing day, after several phone calls, the RSPCA arranged to come and collect it and take it to the South Essex Wildlife Sanctuary, where a vet would check it out. Unfortunately, we later found out that it had injured its legs so badly that it had to be put down. A sad ending. Our cat was most relieved when it was taken away as he had been freaked out by the strange animal!

Rosemary Parmee, Sudbury Gainsborough WI



Remembering Christmas Long Ago

Give me back my Christmas
With traditions I remember
With Santa's sleigh & Rudolph's bells
Starting half way through September
Excitement on my face
As the special day draws near
Everyone singing carols
And full of Christmas cheer



I loved to decorate the Christmas Tree
With presents on the floor
Fairy lights and baubles
Holly tinsel and much more
Garlands and paper chains decorate the room
Logs burn brightly on the fire all aglow
Making the room so cosy
Ready for the Christmas snow

Christmas at my school
Carols and a play to see
The angelic happy faces
And of course a Nativity
Shepherds, Kings Ox and Ass
And to hear the Angels sing
Being part of that first Christmas
Was a very Special Thing

Christmas lunch with my family
My mum, my dad and me
Paper hats and Christmas crackers
Those memories live forever
Chicken and roast potatoes
Sprouts and Christmas Pudding
Chestnuts roasting on the fire
Playing games was always good

The Icing on the Christmas Cake
Stirring the pud a wish to make
Snow flakes fluttered on the ground
Spreading beauty all around
The wonderful Jack Frost winter art
Leaving its patterns upon the glass
The final touch of winter glory
Leaving us to tell the story



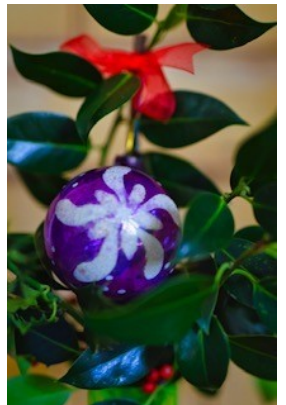
June Bryant, SWFWI Trustee (Barrow WI)

A Very Special Christmas Bauble My Christmas memory starts on Christmas Eve 1958, I'd had tooth ache since the day before and was getting worse. My mother rang the dentist, yes it was Christmas Eve but I could go in and have it out, no option just have it out. We caught the bus into town, which was Oswestry in Shropshire, we arrived at the bus stop and walked up to the big Georgian town house where our dentist had his practice - on the second floor of all places, the ground and first floors housed a rather exclusive ladies dress shop! It was also opposite where I went to school, we went up the two flights of stairs to the dentist's waiting room. I remember that I was filled with dread, I'd had teeth out before so was familiar with the procedure of the face mask for the anaesthesia and the weird dreams you had in the ten minutes or so that it took to take the offending tooth out and come round again. I do remember coming back down the staircase hanging on for grim death to my mother as I guess I was wobbly. There was a small cafe just a short distance from there where my mother said we could have a drink and I could have something to eat, I was starving as I hadn't had anything to eat all day due to the need for a general anaesthetic. A sausage roll, yes that's what I wanted a sausage roll and a milk shake, why I don't know, soup would've been easier to eat.

On the corner of the road we were on was a shop dressed for Christmas, it must've been about 3pm by now and it was still open in the twilight, the window covered with shiny Christmas baubles and tinsel displayed on a lovely Christmas tree and in the centre display was a big purple bauble with a white snowflake right in the centre, I'd admired it every day that I'd passed the shop from the bus window on the way to school but Mother said half a crown was a lot for one large shiny purple bauble, I suppose it was then. However, we went in and to my delight, my Mother bought it for me for being brave. I still have that bauble, it has lost the silver thing at the top that holds it on the tree but it has a piece of wire bend into an 'S' shape which secures it perfectly. It takes pride of place on our tree every year to this day. I love to get it out of its wrapping and every year it comes out safe and sound as you will see.

Happy 62nd Christmas big purple bauble and thanks for the memories.

Julie Higgins, SWFWI Chairman (Risby WI)



A Christmas Poem

I have a list of folks I know, all
written in a book
And every year when
Christmas comes, I go and
take a look,
And that is when I realise that
these names are a part
Not of the book they are written in, but really of my
heart

For each name stands for someone who has crossed
my path sometime,
And in the meeting they've become the rhythm in
each rhyme
And while it sounds fantastic for me to make this
claim,
I really feel that I'm composed of each remembered
name

And while you may not be aware of any special link
Just meeting you has changed my life a lot more than
you think



For once I've met somebody, the years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word or of a friendly face

So never think my Christmas cards are just a mere
routine
Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between,
For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed
to you,

It is because you're on the list that I'm indebted to

For You are but a total of the many folks I've met,
And you happen to be one of those I prefer not to
forget

And whether I have known you for many years or few,
In some ways you have a part in shaping things I do

And every year when Christmas comes, I realise a
new,

The best gifts life can offer is meeting folks like you.
And may the spirit of Christmas that forever endures
Leave its richest blessings in the hearts of mine and
yours.

Submitted by Yvonne King
SWFWI Trustee (Elmswell Exchange WI)

Christmas 1964 Christmas Day was an exercise in patience for us when we were little.

We hung up our stockings (one of Dad's clean socks) on Christmas Eve, and like most children woke early to feel around to see what we had been sent by Father Christmas. Shelled nuts in the toe, a tangerine in the heel and various exciting little toys in the leg. FC was a wily old bird, and always gave us a book in the vain hope that we would stay in bed reading and not wake our parents to show them what had arrived.

I remember the excitement later of going into the sitting room and seeing all the presents piled up – but oh, the frustration, we weren't allowed to open them yet. First we had to go to church, but we still had to wait when we got home. My parents hosted Christmas dinner for our grandparents and auntie who all lived nearby. Presents had to be saved so everybody could watch us opening them.

So were we able to set to after lunch? No – there was the washing up (a long job without a dishwasher), then the grandmas had a nap. Now could we open them? No, Grandma really liked to watch the Queen.

Finally – often 3.30 or 4 pm the exciting moment arrived. This picture

shows me at 9 years' old, already putting on a performance, dressed as Father Christmas and giving out the presents. My red dressing gown and a white flannel provided the 'disguise'. I don't think I fooled my little sister one bit.



Rachel Thomas, SWFWI Trustee
(Newmarket Evening WI)

Sturmer and District WI In 2015 we wrote & staged our own version of the pantomime Cinderella. The village hall was crammed full. Here are Cinders (Kelly) and Prince Charming (Jo) & guess what, nine months later Kelly had her first baby! We invited friends and family to attend. Tea and mince pies were served of course and we all had a great laugh. Linda Bevan, Sturmer and District WI



Xmas Presents for Miss

Chocolates in a fancy box
For a teacher who is tops!
A tea towel and an oven glove
From Gemma Thompson with my love
A bottle stands in thick brown paper
All the best from Darren Baker
Perfumed soap from Lee and Chris
You're our favourite teacher, miss
Flowers in a coloured pot –
Happy Christmas, Helen Bott
A china dog with painted face –
For the teacher who is ace!
And from the nuisance of the class
"The nativity" encased in glass
I know this year I've been a pain
I'm sorry miss – with love from Wayne
And though she's taught for many years
The teacher's eyes still fill with tears
For children know the ones who care
And that is why these gifts are there

From "A Wayne in a Manger" By Gervase Phinn



Father Christmas is taking notes
On all he's got to do,
The sleigh it must be dusted off
And reindeer harnessed too

He'll look at all the letters
That have been sent to him
He'll wrap the toys for girls or boys
The sleigh he'll place them in

He'll put his hat and coat on
Then climb aboard his sleigh
Telling all the reindeer
Let's be on our way.

First he'll try the chimney
Or else he'll try the door
Then he'll eat the tasty treats
That you left on the floor

Then as quickly as he came
He'll be gone and on his way
Delivering all his many toys
Before night turns into day.

By Diane Freeman, Sturmer WI



Treasured Memories

This tiny little card was sent to me by my father for my first Christmas. It was hand drawn by one of his comrades in 1944 while he was in France. As you can imagine it is very special to me.



Margaret Brackenbury
SWFWI Vice Chairman (Moreton Hall WI)

Christmas Carol and Song Quiz

Test your knowledge with Joyce Hurrell's (Great Waldingfield WI) Christmas quiz. The initials are for either the title or the opening lines of Christmas carols or songs (for example; OIRDC = Once in Royal David's City). Grab a pen and see how many you can guess!



1. OCAYF
2. DDMOH
3. LISLISLIS
4. DTHWBOH
5. SBRAYL
6. ISMKSC
7. HTHAS
8. OCT OCT
9. DTKIC
10. ITBM
11. FTS
12. TLDB
13. HYAMLC
14. DYHWIH
15. IBTLALLC
16. JBR
17. TTDOC
18. IBHFC
19. CROAOF
20. LJSSDNS
21. AWGMOO

Answers in the next issue. Out 7th January

Christmas Sewing Bee My hobby is sewing and my favourite time of the year to sew is Christmas. I have two young granddaughters and every year I sew them a special Christmas outfit each. This year I made them skirts using a panelled fabric in one of the Scandi designs that I love! It was very easy to make. I cut the panels into two, sewed up the ends and put some elastic in the waist! I added straps using a remnant of coordinating fabric.



This year I also discovered a new company - June Taylor Inc. One of her products is a quilting pack to make a quilted mug mat. I realised I could use remnants of past Christmas dresses to make myself a Christmas themed one. I've never made anything like this before but it was very easy. It then occurred to me I could make smaller sized mug mats using my own fabric and wadding. They make great presents! I also made place mats following the same method using an unusual blue Christmas fabric remnant which went perfectly with my blue rimmed dinner plates.



I still had a bit of fabric left when a friend mentioned that she was making Christmas masks! Brilliant idea I thought! I made quite a few and made the fabric remnants go further by putting a plain red fabric on the back of the mask. I also put a piece of non-woven interfacing inbetween layers to make them safer! Let's hope I won't be making these again next year!!!



Merry Christmas to all you from the Busy Christmas Sewing Bee,

On behalf of Suffolk West Federation of WIs, from your Board of Trustees, WI Advisers, Sub Committees, Federation Representatives and the two Rachels, we would like to wish you all a very



And we look forward to hopefully a more social and enjoyable New Year with you all.