

WELCOME  
to the  
BISHOPSTONE  
with  
HINTON PARVA  
WOMEN'S INSTITUTE



# **Welcome to the Women's Institute and in particular to the Bishopstone with Hinton Parva WI**

The Bishopstone with Hinton Parva WI is a very friendly, active WI that offers its members companionship, as well as a range of leisure and educational activities. This leaflet gives a brief oversight of what we do and how we do it, to ease you into your membership and help you identify and join in with those activities that interest you. A brief background to the WI movement is also included to clarify some of the terminology you will inevitably hear as a new member; you can find out more from our own web page: [www.ashbury.org.uk/womeninst.php](http://www.ashbury.org.uk/womeninst.php) and also from the National Federation of Women's Institutes web site: [www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk)

## **1. About the Bishopstone with Hinton Parva WI**

Our WI was established in 1954 and currently has 53 members. Our annual programme runs from April until March and we normally meet at 7.30pm on the second Thursday of each month for about 2 hours either in Bishopstone or Hinton Parva Village Hall. Ordinary meetings comprise a short update on current business, a guest speaker and social time over refreshments; the current annual programme may be obtained from any of our Committee members. Our members provide the refreshments for meetings on a rotational basis. The Annual Meeting takes place in March when we review our year and elect our Committee. There is always a "Members Meeting" in October, which gives two of our ladies the opportunity to experience being President and Secretary for the evening with a view to perhaps becoming future Committee members. As well as this, we organise a number of special events during the year, such as a Summer BBQ, a Flower and Handicraft Show, a Birthday Party and a Christmas Celebration – more about these later. Our Secretary will mention all upcoming events at our monthly meetings and display flyers about them on the notice boards. Sign your name on the relevant flyer if you see something that interests you. The Secretary will send off for tickets and you will be asked for a cheque made out to the Bishopstone with Hinton Parva WI. The printed programme lists our Committee Members and the telephone numbers of our Officers – please don't hesitate to ring any of us if you have any queries. Whilst we put our annual programme together with the aim of meeting the interests of our members and following the ethos of the WI, fresh ideas are always welcome, so if there is something you would particularly like to hear about, or do, please feel free to mention it to anyone on the Committee. We would be delighted to hear from you.

We very much look forward to having the pleasure of your company and to your participation in our activities.

### **1.1 Our History in Pictures**

If you would like to know more about the history of our WI and what we've done over the years since 1954, please take a look at the series of scrapbooks which have been maintained by June James. They are a fascinating record not only of this WI, but also of village life over the years. Don't forget to help us keep the scrapbooks going by giving us any items that you think should be added to these important archives.

## **1.2 Our Special Events**

### Competitions

For the "Bloom of the Month Competition" members bring along to meetings a single flower picked from their garden; the winning bloom is normally judged by the guest speaker. We also have other monthly competitions often related to the speaker's talk and these too are usually judged by a guest. Points are awarded on a monthly basis for each competition and these are totalled up in March each year to determine the winners.

### Annual Flower and Handicraft Show

This takes place each June and the schedule includes flower, cookery and craft classes as well as classes for children and men. External judges evaluate the exhibits and there are trophies and small monetary prizes to be won. Any entries left at the end of the show are auctioned off to make a little extra money to help pay for other activities.

### Summer Event

Summer provides an ideal excuse for a BBQ, Safari Supper, or something similar; partners/friends are invited and we socialise in a relaxed setting – sometimes in the garden of one of our members.

### Birthday Party

Each September we celebrate our "birthday" with a fun gathering of members, partners and friends. It may be a party in the village hall, a trip on the river, a meal out, or anything suggested by a member and agreed by the rest. We aim to do something that can be enjoyed and afforded by all. Everyone contributes some food to the occasion and we have a birthday cake too.

### Christmas Celebration

Our Christmas meeting is an evening party to which we invite partners, friends, and members of other WIs. The Committee provides the main course and our members contribute desserts. There is often some form of entertainment, either from our own members or an external group, and we finish with carols. It is always a good evening as well as a great opportunity to celebrate Christmas together.

## Outings

Throughout the year we organise day trips, half day trips, evening trips and even weekend breaks to places of interest or to theatres. In the recent past we have visited Littlecote House, Arkell's Brewery, a Health Farm, lunched at Millets Farm, sailed on the Solent, made DNA from bananas, organised theatre trips to see Thoroughly Modern Millie and Buddy and spent weekends in Dublin and in Derbyshire. We are always keen to receive suggestions for things to do and places to go.

## Cookery

If you are keen on cooking, your skills will be very much appreciated. As well as making sumptuous dishes for our own special events and refreshments for our monthly meetings, our members help prepare and serve refreshments in our two Village Halls for other WIs and Societies who pass through our villages on day outings. This is a good way to meet people and also makes a little extra money to fund our other activities. The WI has produced an excellent range of cookbooks which are available, like all WI books, from the County Federation office; you can also search for recipes on the WI web site: [www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk).

## Crafts and other Skills

There are lots of opportunities to learn new skills, so do keep an eye on "Wiltshire News" for dates of workshops and other related events. Remember too the many courses on offer at Denman College, and the wide range of books available through the County office. One of our members who attended a card making course at Denman College subsequently organised a number of local workshops to cascade the skills she learned to others. Craft afternoons are now firmly on our annual programme. There are more such events in the pipeline.

## Other activities

In addition to the above, we have a walking group, a movie club, scrabble, whist and indoor skittles teams, a reading circle, bridge teas and local litter blitzes. New ideas are always welcomed.

## Twinning

We are in negotiation with St Martin's WI in Jersey about formally twinning with them. This will facilitate regular communication, exchange visits, and exchange of ideas about things to do.

## **1.3 Our Bye-Laws**

Our own WI's Bye-Laws (last revised in 1998) are set out below for information. The President or Secretary will be pleased to answer any questions that you may have:

- The meeting should be held on the second Thursday in each month.
- The meeting should be an evening one.
- There should be one Vice-President.
- There should be up to ten members on the Committee.
- The Annual Meeting to be held in March.
- The financial year to end on 31<sup>st</sup> December.
- In the event of an emergency decision needing to be taken the President, the Vice President, the Secretary and the Treasurer shall be empowered to decide what action shall be taken.
- Meetings shall be held in Bishopstone and Hinton Parva Village Halls on an equal number of occasions.

## **1.4 Publications**

As part of your annual subscription you will receive monthly issues of "Wiltshire News" from the Wiltshire Federation of WIs, plus bimonthly issues of "WI Life" which is the National Magazine of the Women's Institute. As well as this, a diverse range of WI Books can be purchased from County Office on line ([www.thewi.org.uk/wiltshire](http://www.thewi.org.uk/wiltshire)), by phone (01380 739340) or by email ([info@wiltshirewi.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:info@wiltshirewi.eclipse.co.uk)).

## **2. About the Women's Institute**

### **2.1 Formation, Aims and Membership**

The Women's Institute was formed in 1915 with two clear aims: to revitalise rural communities and to encourage women to become more involved in producing food during the First World War. Since then its aims have broadened and it is now the largest women's organisation in the UK. It celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2005 and currently has 205,000 members in 6,500 WIs throughout England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. It is completely independent, non-party-political and non-sectarian. Originally a rurally-based organisation, WIs can now be found in villages, towns and cities.

### **2.2 Structure**

WIs are geographically linked within 70 County and Island Federations, each with a regional office; our own WI belongs to the Wiltshire Federation which has its Head Office in Devizes. The WIs and Federations in turn come under the over-arching umbrella of the National Federation (NFWI) which has an Office in London with 70 full-time staff. You will no doubt hear the two types of Federation referred to as "County" and "National" from time to time. As is the case in our own WI, each level of the organisation is run by a committee of elected members; the NFWI Board of Trustees is democratically elected every two years by the members.

Institutes can choose to link together with neighbouring WIs to form a Group. Our WI for example, belongs to the Ridgeway Group which comprises seven WIs; the others are Stratton St Margaret WI, Upper Stratton WI, Chiseldon WI, Ermine Street WI, Liden WI and Ellendune WI. The Ridgeway Group holds

Spring and Autumn evening meetings each year, with tasks being organised on a rotational basis. There is always a guest speaker, a competition and a raffle, plus light refreshments; these events offer an opportunity not only to meet members of other local WIs, but also to exchange ideas about guest speakers and leisure activities.

### **2.3 Annual General Meeting**

The AGM of the National Federation of Women's Institutes takes place every June with on average 5,000 WI members attending. Every year WI members submit resolutions to a selection process and the most popular suggestions are put to a vote at the AGM. If members support these resolutions, they become mandates and form the basis of the WI's campaigning activities in years ahead.

### **2.4 International Links**

The WI has close International links through affiliation to the Associated Country Women of the World (known as ACWW) which links several million women in 70 countries. All WI members are automatically members of ACWW and each WI donates small amounts of money to ACWW (Coins for Friendship); this money is used to help under privileged women in third world countries. The WI works for women wherever they live, whatever their age, interests, religious or political views.

### **2.5 Training and Informal Learning**

These can be accessed both through the Federations and at Denman College (of which more later). Many leisure pursuits are available at Institute, County and National levels and there are also opportunities to gain experience in public speaking, committee work and international affairs, as well as meeting, talking and enjoying the company of women.

### **2.6 The WI Moodle**

The WI Moodle is an on-line information and learning resource that can be accessed via the NFWI web site. It's packed with interesting things to read and to try, so do sign on and give it a try.

## **3. About The Wiltshire Federation of Women's Institutes**

All WIs located in Wiltshire are affiliated to the WFWI whose County Office is located in Devizes; it deals largely with organisational matters, and offers help and support to any Institute. Within the Federation there are a number of County Committees which together cover all areas of WI activity in the County and also organise many events. These are: the Public Affairs Committee, the

Sport & Leisure Committee, the Home Economics, the Arts and Crafts Committee, the Music and Drama Committee, and the Events Committee.

To keep up to date with all the news and opportunities at County level don't forget to read through the monthly issues of "Wiltshire News". There is always a lot going on in Wiltshire for WI members to engage with.

Another valuable function of the County Office is to distribute the wide range of titles available from WI Books, the WI's own publishing company; all are informative, well-produced and inexpensive. You can get a catalogue from the Federation Secretary at the following address:

Stephanie Pawling	Tel: 01380 739340
WI House	Fax: 01380 722383
17 Couch Lane	Email: <a href="mailto:info@wiltshirewi.eclipse.co.uk">info@wiltshirewi.eclipse.co.uk</a>
Devizes SN10 1EB	Website: <a href="http://www.thewi.org.uk/wiltshire">www.thewi.org.uk/wiltshire</a>

The Office is open from 10.00am until 3.00pm, Monday to Thursday.

#### **4. WI Campaigns**

The Women's Institute has always had a strong voice in public affairs, lobbying Parliament and campaigning for issues of importance to women and their families. In addition, WI members are informed on new developments in social and environmental affairs through the Public Affairs Department, which researches issues of particular interest to members and promotes the NFWI's policies to Government, the Opposition and other appropriate bodies.

Over the years the WI has campaigned on a wide range of issues that matter to women and their communities, including Equal Pay in 1942, Breast Cancer Screening in 1975, Aids in 1986 and the introduction of new EU legislation to reduce the threat of Hazardous Chemicals In Everyday Products in 2006. Today our campaigns range from Climate Change and Food Waste to Ending Violence Against Women, The Plight of the Honey Bee, and Save our Libraries.

Every year WI members have the chance to put forward issues or 'resolutions' that they would like the national body to campaign on. These resolutions go through a year long debating and consultation process by the membership. Once the resolutions have been short-listed by the membership a select number are chosen for discussion at the AGM in June. If passed, these then become mandates and form the basis of campaigning activities in the years ahead. This process ensures that our campaigns have been through a democratic process involving all members and come from the grass roots of the organisation.

## **5. WI Recreation, Sport and Leisure Opportunities**

The Sport and Leisure Committee of WFWI organises a wide range of visits, activities and competitions that are open to all WI members. Details are publicised in "Wiltshire News" and are also brought to members' attention by our Secretary at our monthly meetings. We routinely enter teams for the County Scrabble, Indoor Skittles and Whist Leagues and usually do well – importantly, you don't need to be an expert, the aim is to meet new people and have fun. We usually organise at least one Bridge Tea each year to raise funds for our WI and to enable players of all standards to come together and play without the pressure of competition. As you might expect, cookery demonstrations are organised by WFWI across the County; these offer a great opportunity to make and taste new dishes and also to exchange ideas. As well as this, there are many opportunities at County level to take up new crafts, either through demonstrations or workshops, or via more formal courses at Denman College. If you have a skill that you would like to share with others we would be more than happy to run a local workshop.

A wide range of books may be accessed via the County office and "Wiltshire News" and "WI Life" are both good reads. You can additionally buy each year a WI wall calendar, a WI diary full of useful information and great value bulb collections for your garden. Details for ordering all of these are announced at relevant meetings.

## **6. Denman College**

Denman is the WI's own Adult Education College located in Marcham Village near Abingdon in Oxfordshire; it was opened in 1948 to provide learning opportunities for all WI members and is a member of the Adult Residential Colleges Association. For more information see: [www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk) and follow the Training Link. Denman offers over 600 courses, either residential or day schools, which are open to all - WI members and non-members, men and women and students of all ages. Courses are held in the modern purpose-built teaching centre; a brand new WI Cookery School was opened for the first time in April 2009. Some 6000 students attend courses at Denman College each year with a maximum of 72 people attending one of five or six courses at any one time. Residential courses run from 2 - 4 nights and there are numerous one day courses offering 5 hours of tuition with a high practical content for those not able to stay longer. The range of courses on offer is huge and the atmosphere very friendly. WI members enjoy reduced fees. Denman is only 40 minutes drive away from our WI so is easily accessible.

The main public rooms at Denman are located in an elegant Georgian country house set in 17 acres of landscaped gardens. It has 72 en suite bedrooms each with central heating and tea/coffee making facilities.



Our WI provides a bursary of £200 every second year to enable one of our members to attend a course at Denman College. The lucky winner is drawn out of a hat at the Annual Meeting.

In April 2009 our WI successfully attracted grant funding from the National Lottery to permit each of our members to attend a Denman College course of her choice. In total, members attended 36 different courses and then cascaded the skills learned to each other, to other local WIs and to the public via a series of six open "See and Try Days" which proved very popular.

## **7. Jerusalem**

Should you not yet know the words of Jerusalem by William Blake they are printed below:

And did those feet in ancient times  
Walk upon England's mountains green?

And was the Holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?

And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among those dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!

Bring me my arrows of desire!

Bring me my spear! O clouds unfold;

Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,

Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.