



Risby WI

Obituary: Rosie Hows



It is with great sadness that Risby WI inform you that our longest standing member Rosie Hows passed away recently. Rosie first joined Risby WI as her mother was a member, she was only a young girl then but must have enjoyed herself because she stayed for the rest of her life.

Rosie was always beautifully turned out and full of fun. Only a few years ago she joined in with a Belly Dancing class and, even when a little less mobile, Hand Jived away to 50s and 60s hits at our Christmas party. Rosie also joined in with Federation holidays to Holland, France and Scotland. Risby WI has many happy memories of Rosie, her support and kind words, she is missed by us all.

Rosie's passing is particularly poignant, as she was also the grandmother of our Federation Secretary.

Grandma was very proud to be a WI member. As a child, I fondly remember going to WI events and popping into the Whiting Street WI office with her.



Little did I know it would go full circle, and when I became SWFWI Federation Secretary in 2018 she was even prouder. We made many more WI memories together; a trip to watch Calendar Girls, a boat ride along the River Stour, quiz nights, plenty of tea and cake, and my favourite memory, a holiday to Cardiff for the NFWI Annual Meeting in 2019. It's my honour to keep her WI spirit alive.

Rachel Hows | Federation Secretary

Norton WI: From Little Acorns

Norton had a thriving WI for almost 100 years but, due to Covid, the group was forced to close and, sadly, didn't reach the milestone. However, former President Helen Taylor was very keen to establish a new group. So, last summer Helen advertised in the Norton News and a small group met at her home to discuss the possibility. Then, with support from Suffolk West, a series of get togethers were arranged, which proved successful.

Our formation meeting was held on 13th April at Norton Baptist Church. It was with great delight to see the meeting room rapidly fill up and registration forms flying off the table! We think we will have a membership of 20+ which is fantastic, considering we thought 12 would be a good number!

With a President elected, a Committee formed and some speakers already booked Norton WI is off to a flying start. We are so grateful to Helen for planting that acorn last year.

For information on Norton WI contact nortonwisuff@gmail.com

Bury Afternoon WI

A change to our April speaker found us watching an episode of **BBC's**



A Secret Garden, filmed in the garden of wildlife cameraman Martin Dorhn.

It was a fascinating study of the life of bees and the flowers providing a haven for several different species. Bee city, created by Martin, grew so crowded he had to provide more accommodation. Hotels were made of wood and brick.

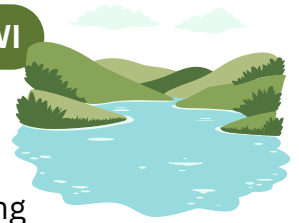
Some fun bee facts we learnt:

- A bee can visit up to 5,000 flowers in a single day.
- Bees perform a waggle dance to tell other bees where to find food.
- Bumblebees use their feet to tell if a flower has already been visited.
- Only female bees have stingers.
- There are over 20,000 species of bee.
- One species will attack another.
- Leafcutter bees cut their leaves to the exact size required.

In March, our speaker was **Sandra Gold-Wood** who gave a very enlightening talk on the **Canary Girls**. These were the women and girls who worked in the munitions factories during WWI and WWII. The toxic ingredients used in the shells were mixed by hand and in time the ladies' skins turned yellow giving them their nickname. They worked in dangerous conditions and many lost their lives to accidents, as well as enemy bombs falling on the factories. Unbelievably there is no memorial to these ladies in the National Arboretum! Sandra is determined to change this.

Honington & Sapiston WI

Our April speaker was **Anthony Whittingham** who talked about creating **Larkwood Lakes** as a nature reserve.



The lakes were originally gravel pits and dug out 42 years ago. It was then a trout farm for several years before being bought by Anthony who created a stunning landscape turned over to rewilding. Today they are an area with lakes, chalk streams and mature trees which are home to many species of birds, invertebrates and mammals.

Seven different types of bats and seventeen otters have been seen in the area. Anthony explained out of 210 chalk stream areas in the world, 80% are located in southern and eastern England with around 29% in East Anglia some of which flow through Larkwood Lakes. A very interesting and enthusiastic speaker whose talk was enjoyed by all.

www.larkwoodlakes.co.uk/

In March, we invited **Crafty Foxes** to come down and show us some Easter crafts. Michelle demonstrated how to blow and decorate eggs for Easter using dye, tape, stickers and even temporary tattoos! Members than made their own.

The evening finished with Doreen our Archivist, delivering a lovely message in light of international women's day. She spoke about the women that had come before us at Honington and Sapiston WI and the achievements of our members and former members, one was celebrating their 73rd wedding anniversary!

Pakenham WI

Mike Rhodes from **Hawkswood Vineyard** was our speaker this month.

He talked about his journey from being a surgeon (he retired in 2013), to winemaker and explained making wine is a science, not an art.



In 2015, Mike started a small vineyard, needing help and advice, and bought some proper equipment – a crusher/destemmer. He converted a small shed into a winery, bought tanks, a corking machine and grapes. The first proper harvest was in 2016 and in 2017 he won a silver medal. In 2018, Mike moved to Thurston and developed the vineyard. A stable block was converted into a winery and was processing a ton of grapes a day. With planted vines, pest control was needed – Harris hawk. The vineyard was recently awarded best in Eastern England by Oz Clarke. Hawkswood Vineyard & Winery has tours and a new tasting room. Next outing for our WI??

Last month, **Mary Newton** made her third visit to our WI on the topic **Serial Rapists**. Although the subject was disturbing, her knowledge and insight were impressive. She explained the ways investigators gather data and how complex the process of analysing and coordinating information can be before identifying the offender. Mary discussed the difficulties involved in assessing allegations while ensuring victims are properly supported. Distinguishing also false accusations from women who had supposedly been raped.

Long Melford WI

Last month our speaker was **Jennifer Antill** who told us all about the links between the British and Russian families. Amazingly, the first link started as far back as 1066 when, after the invasion, a daughter of King Harold fled into exile and eventually married into a Russian Royal dynasty.



Also in March, we crocheted over 340 poppies for the Standing with Giants campaign; to mark International Women's Day the group donated toiletries to a women's refuge in Bury St Edmunds; the coffee morning group donated money to Long Melford Garden Centre to buy a defibrillator and, after a request from the mother of a premature baby, a member produced a couple of knitted hats, jackets and a blanket.

In April, we took part in a **Tap Dance Workshop** directed by **Jo Thornley**, which resulted in much laughter and an impressive two-minute tap dance routine. We will be hosting our annual open April Cinema Night to raise money for our 2026 chosen charity, **Petals** - the Baby Loss Counselling Charity.

Then, in May, the group will be holding a Clothing Exchange Evening where good quality but unwanted clothing will be on show and a donation made to Petals for any item taken.

www.petalscharity.org

Petals
The Baby Loss Counselling Charity

Chevington WI

Wow what a meeting! Firstly we had to keep getting more chairs out as we had eight lovely new visitors and



24 members attend! Our speaker, **Heather Tilbury Phillips**, was an absolute powerhouse, immaculately dressed and very elegant!! Her subject was her work **with Mary Quant**. Heather had worked in a huge variety of Marketing and PR roles before starting to work with Mary as director of Mary Quant Limited in the 1970s. She has a huge amount of praise and admiration for Mary, holding her in very high regard not only for her huge contribution to fashion but also her attitude to women, encouraging women to have fun and lead their lives to the full.

Heather first met Mary and her husband Alexander Plunkett-Greene in 1967 when Heather was working for Kangol which at the time had the license for Mary's line of berets which are now iconic. Heather very soon became their publicity manager and joined the couple in the Chelsea offices.

Heather regaled tales of Mary's business acumen, her famous Vidal Sassoon 5 point bob, apparently, she had a double crown but maintained her trademark hair!! She was signed to Vogue/Butterick so her designs were accessible to anyone who could sew to Make a Mary Quant outfit deciding on your own hemline length, ranges of makeup and hosiery so you could choose better tights for the ever

decreasing skirts which were a good look with stockings and suspenders, absolute ground breaking!!

Heather went on to curate the Mary Quant exhibition at the V&A in 2019 which was hugely successful. She described Mary as caring, shy and creative amongst other amazing values. Mary's quote "Fashion is not frivolous it is a part of being alive today" is as relevant today as it was then.

Heather was an excellent speaker and gave us an excellent insight not only to Mary but also the fashions of the sixties and onwards making her daisy trademark as recognisable now as it was then.

Hartest WI

We welcomed **textile conservator, May Berkouwer** to talk about her work in rescuing the



'election dresses' worn by the daughters of Frederick Hervey, 4th Marquess of Bristol when he stood to be the MP for Bury. The dresses, one pink and one white, were made of 'tinned silk', a fabric with a high sheen created by treatment with metal salts which, over time, had split and fragmented the fibres. This was a hugely challenging prospect, even for a conservator as vastly experienced as May. Both dresses required painstaking effort and extremely delicate handling to preserve them and prevent further deterioration. It took five months to have both dresses ready for display.

Horringer Court WI

Earlier this year, Horringer Court WI welcomed the **Child Contact Centre** to come and tell us about their amazingly important work. A local charity, that is based in BSE, it enables parents to keep in touch with their children after a break up. It is right on our doorstep but unknown.

Our March meeting was a surprise 90th birthday party for our lovely Jill. We had music, a buffet and a very tasty gluten/dairy free cake so everyone could enjoy it. I think Jill might still be wearing her tiara! Such a great night.

Pakenham WI: Parisian Supper Review

What a wonderful evening the ladies of the Suffolk West Federation put on in March at The Erskine Centre. We were entertained



by Jane Hoggar – ex Bluebell dancer – at a Parisian Cabaret Supper. She performed fabulous songs (finishing with *Non, je ne regrette rien* Edith Piaf's famous song) and even did a 'mini' can can. Her husband provided the music and contributed various historical facts regarding the origins of cabaret. The delicious food, prepared and served by the SWFWI team, had a French flavour. We were presented with boeuf bourguignon followed by French apple tart and cream. A truly fabulous evening and Suffolk West Federation are to be congratulated for arranging such a memorable event.

Great Ashfield & Badwell Ash WI

Recently, **Suffolk Accident & Rescue Services (SARS)** joined us to deliver **CPR training** to our members. We also welcomed members from Pakenham and Great Barton WI's who have joined us in the Blackbourne Group.

Our members also took part in knitting poppies for the Standing With Giants project and we were pleased to deliver 200 poppies to SWFWI.



Woolpit WI

Faye Jones' talk The wonderful world of stinging nettles and their many uses began on a serious scientific note with the botanical names for the nettle plants found in England, and the many species across the world. Faye then entertained with details of how nettles can be used to make fabric, string and dye. She brought a fascinating display including nettle fabric and drinks made from nettles.



Earlier this year, we had **Lucy Lewis** and her talk **Ceremonial Cambridge - the role of Proctors and University Constabulary**. She gave a lively account of her work as the first woman Marshall at the university, wearing a beautiful University ceremonial gown trimmed with velvet.

Bury WI

Our speaker for April was **Helen Hillier**.

Helen demonstrated three beautiful Easter arrangements



using flowers from the garden together with birch logs, driftwood, pussywillow and shells she had collected on walks.

These were then raffled along with a hand tied bouquet. Lucky winners took these home, and everyone left with an Easter egg, courtesy of our President.

Following on from last year's resolution

Bystanders can be Lifesavers, we

recently had Marie Honeyfield from

Anglia CPR as a speaker. Marie took us

through what signs to spot when

someone is suffering a cardiac arrest,

giving us step-by-step directions about

what can be done after calling 999 for

assistance. She said the main thing to

remember was to do what you can

without putting yourself in danger. After

questions we had the opportunity to try

out CPR techniques on a dummy, and

see how a defibrillator works.

Stanton WI

Stanton WI enjoyed another evening

outing watching **The Simon & Garfunkel**

Story at the Apex. We were all taken

back to our

youth by

the music &

backdrop of

images

from the

era.



Sturmer WI

For our March meeting

we had a talk and slide

show by **Hawk Honey**



about **forgotten bees**. This was a

fascinating subject from a person who was

an expert in bees and wasps, and a scary

look at the effects that are playing a part

in their decline. We were made aware how

changes in agriculture and habitat have

had an adverse effect on bees and

insects. We watched a slide show detailing

the life of a bee and Hawk produced some

samples of different types of bee. He

encouraged us all to leave our gardens

untidy, grow wild flowers and make a bee

hotel. The talk was very thought provoking

and Hawk was a passionate and engaging

speaker.

For our February meeting we had **Katie**

Williams a Palliative Care nurse come and

speak to us. Katie has worked in palliative

care for twenty five years and it was

obvious that she is dedicated to those in

her care, and helps ease their passage

from life to death. Katie told us that the

end of life is important and everyone

deserves a good death.

Drinkstone WI

This month we were joined by **Bury Reel**

Club who gave us a brief history of the

origins of **Scottish Dancing**. The group

then demonstrated three different types

of dance; a fast Jig, followed by a slightly

slower Reel and finishing with a very slow

Strathspey. We were then invited onto the

floor and had great fun being guided

through a Reel dance.

Rickinghall WI

At our March meeting **Stuart Race**, owner of **The Woolpatch**, a yarn shop in



Long Melford, came to tell us the history of Lavenham Blue wool. Stuart took over the Woolpatch in September 2016 knowing very little about wool and yarns but quickly gained knowledge. He also learnt about the traditional way of producing Lavenham Blue. Until the 17th century, it was produced using indigo from woad plants to dye wool using a traditional method that involved removing oxygen from a vat solution, necessary for the dye to work, so that the wool when immersed would change to blue – the longer left in the solution the darker blue the fleece would become. However, the 17th century Industrial Revolution meant that the traditional method declined but its fame remains. Stuart now creates his own Lavenham Blue, buying fleeces from local farmers and using the traditional woad dyeing method. He demonstrated this with a small vat of solution and skeins of wool and fleece.

In February, our speaker was Kevin Parson, a volunteer for Suffolk Accident Rescue Service. Set up in 1972, they rely on Consultants in Emergency Medicine, Anaesthetists and Critical Care Paramedics to volunteer on their days off. We were all impressed by their commitment, including Kevin, whose aim is to save as many lives as possible.

Shimpling & Alpheton WI

We were given a session on **CPR** by **Suffolk Accident Rescue Service** as our response to the WI campaign, **Bystanders Can**



Be Lifesavers, and because we felt this is an important subject, we invited villagers along to join us.

SARS taught us the difference between a cardiac arrest and a heart attack and what to do. The chain of survival was then explained, including symptoms, plus the Danger-Response-Shout, Airways-Breathing-CPR-Defibrillator sequence, with how to call 999, administering CPR and using a defibrillator. We then tried CPR on the dummies called 'Annies' and tried the training defibrillators. We cannot praise the SARS volunteers enough - the charity receives no government funding - but one day our own lives may depend on them.

Wickhambrook WI

Seven members of our Books & Shenanigans group spent the weekend in York on a book crawl of



nine bookshops. We also included a walk of the wall, an art gallery and some sketching time. A fabulous weekend of both books and shenanigans.