

It only seems like yesterday that we were enjoying our first meeting of 2023 – Dancing for Wellness with Amanda Sanders – a fun way to start the year. This evening the last, but hopefully fun meeting of 2023 – our Christmas party.

We've had a great year with lots of highs – the Group Meeting for one – and some lows – the recent sudden death of our member, Amanda Fleming, the lowest. Amanda had only been a member of Avening WI for a few years but supported us in many ways including skittles, Bite to Eat and walks to name a few. Our thoughts and prayers go to her partner, Crichton, and her family at this difficult time. Our thoughts and prayers also go to the family of one of our ex members, Shirley Butler, whose sudden death was also announced this week. Shirley lived in Avening for a number of years before moving next door to her daughter in Nags Head.

Liz

Forty years remembered by Gill Thomas

I joined the WI when I moved into Avening on New Years Eve, 1983/4. My neighbour in Sandford Leaze, Fanny Wright, invited me to come along with her to the Memorial Hall on a Thursday night and the rest is history. I found a warm welcome that evening, made some great friends and when a few months later I discovered I was pregnant with Edward, found I had company. There were five of us expecting babies in January 1985! When we moved to France Lynch in 1990 the question was, would I move WIs? Or become a dual member? The answer to the latter was easily found – France Lynch meets on the second Wednesday of the month and the idea of two WI meetings on consecutive nights didn't really appeal. Anyway, my friends were members of Avening WI so I decided to stay put!

I frequently say that joining Avening WI was the best thing I have done. We've laughed and cried together, been to some interesting places and done some daft things too. Avening WI opened doors for me that led to amazing experiences (still does!) – all I had to do was to sign my name on a board on the second Thursday in the month and join in the fun.

Thank you for that warm welcome all those years ago and for still making Avening WI so special. Here's to the next 40 years, eh?

Ready to cut the cake at Gill's star-making workshop; Wendy, Gill A and Shirley join Gill as fellow members of AWI for 40 years.....or more!



Thank you Gill for hosting and leading a very enjoyable star-making workshop for your AWI friends; a wonderful way to celebrate those 40 years. Thank you for being such a fun and inspirational member of AWI. Thanks also to Liz for making the lovely celebration cake.

December 2023

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wed 10th Jan 12.30
AWI Book Club lunch at The Olive Tree, Nailsworth

Tues 16th Jan AWI running the Community Café

Tues 30th Jan Incinerator Tour, Javelin Park.
Information in Helen's email of 29.11.23

Wed 24th April Walking tour of Bath (details to follow)

Sat 25th May Westminster Abbey visit (details to follow)

NEXT MEETING JAN 11TH

For Peat's sake – a new generation of composts
Victoria Wright

Flower of the month
Raffle
Refreshments: Gill T & Sharon

Please bring your completed Resolution Slips to this meeting or email your vote to Helen

Details of the resolutions and voting slips are on p22 of Nov/Dec WI Life

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO DECEMBER BIRTHDAY GIRLS

ALISON POTTS

ELIZABETH OLIVER

RACHEL WILSON

Avening WI President:

Liz Knowles

Treasurer:

Wendy Jennings

Secretary:

Helen Haiselden

Website:

http://
aveningwi.wordpress.com



Avening WI

meets in the Memorial Hall
on the
second Thursday of every month

Visitors are always welcome!

Please note There will be boxes to collect your postage stamps and used Christmas/greeting cards at the January meeting.

Cobalt

Sue sent £112 in early December which was doubled by 'The Big Give' to £224

The grand total raised for the year was £1001.

Thank you to Sue O for collecting the donations and selling cards and to our members for their generosity.

November walk by Sharon Lodge

On Thursday November 23rd a group of us stalwart walkers set off from the reservoir on Minchinhampton Common. The wind was chill and keen, but when we reached Burleigh we were sheltered by trees lining the lanes and it was a very enjoyable 2 and 1/2 miles round amble that culminated in a very welcome lunch at the Old Lodge.

There was definitely warmth in the sun that day, and we paused several times to drink in the views of houses on hillsides glimpsed through the gaps in the trees. Several Holly trees bore red berries, denoting a harsh winter to come according to old folk lore. Will I never remember to take secateurs with me on my walks?

I encountered my first squeeze gate and photographed it to share with you.

Three of our party were accompanied by their black labradors that thoroughly enjoyed sniffing through all the fallen leaves along the way. So identical were they all that one had a lead clipped to its collar for the return home until the lady concerned had it pointed out that she had hold of the wrong dog. No names - no pack drill!

It was unanimously agreed that we are fortunate to live in such a beautiful area.



Visit to Worcester Victorian Christmas Market by Bridget

Our Christmas events got underway with a coach trip to Worcester on Friday 1st December, a cold and misty morning. However by the time we got off the coach the sun was shining. The festive event was very well organised and as we left the coach we were each handed a leaflet detailing all the stalls and a map showing their positions.....no excuse for missing any of them. There were a wide variety of colourful cabins with crafts, gifts, local food and drink, clothes and much more. Also plenty of hot food and drink to tempt us. The Christmas music, festive decorations and lovely aromas wafting around made browsing very pleasurable.

There were two 'policeman' on very high stilts having fun with passers by even though they were 'on duty'! Some of us visited the impressive Cathedral where there were more stalls all around the cloisters. Gwyneth and I had a light lunch in the beautiful Chapter House, which as well as being a lovely peaceful area, had an interesting display of photographs of well known landmarks and buildings of the British Isles. After more shopping we walked back to the coach pick up point via the fairground....more stalls, dodgems, ferris wheel and the lovely traditional roundabout featuring beautifully painted horses.

An enjoyable day out and a great start to the festive season.

Avening WI Christmas Lunch by Sue Swan

On Wednesday 7th December, 20 members met up at The Crown, Minchinhampton. It was a very cold dreary day but the warmth hit us as soon as we walked inside. We were given an enthusiastic welcome and were all impressed by the high standard of the Christmas decorations and festive atmosphere.

Soon we were all seated around a long table and Helen put out beautiful place and menu choice cards which she and Andrea had so cleverly designed.

After pulling our crackers, donning paper hats and sharing cracker jokes, we were served with our delicious starters. Main courses followed and most of us went trad with roast turkey and all the trimmings.

Those of us with a wee bit of room left had puds, others coffee, but all too soon it was time to brave the outdoors again.

A great choice of venue, thanks go to the committee for arranging this enjoyable event. For a few of us, it was our first visit to The Crown and I for one will certainly return.



Skittles by Gwyneth

We was robbed!

The long anticipated final of the GFWI skittles plate competition against Gorsley and Kilcot WI took place at the end of November in Gloucester. The Avening team was leading from the outset but after a dispute over a No ball we lost by a single point.

Thank you to all our members who took part in the competition from the start and a special thank you to Nell for being our regular sticker.



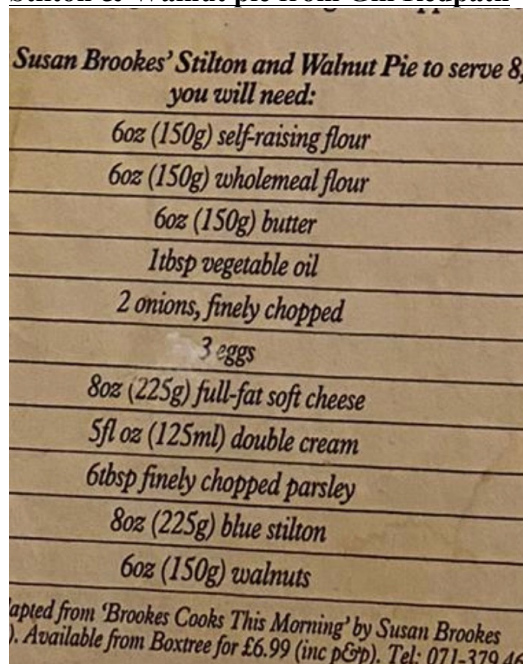
Christmas wreath making workshop

This is one of my favourite pre-Christmas events; I love spending the morning with friends in the relaxed, peaceful atmosphere creating our Christmas wreaths. Twelve of us gathered in the Social Club on a bright Monday. With lots of greenery from our gardens to choose from, plus decorations and colourful ribbons etc we got to work with enthusiasm and had soon produced a varied selection of lovely wreaths. We completed a creative and sociable morning, by sharing a lovely bring and share lunch. Bridget



Delicious food always features at AWI events. Here are members' recipes that have been requested....they might be useful over the festive season.

Stilton & Walnut pie from Gill Redpath



.Method

1. Make the shortcrust pastry as recipe or use readymade shortcrust, wrap in clingfilm and rest in the fridge.
2. Heat oil in frying pan and cook onions until soft but not browned. Cool
3. In a bowl mix together onion, 2 eggs, soft cheese, double cream and parsley. Don't overbeat.
5. Cut rind off stilton and discard. Crumble cheese into pea sized pieces.
6. Roughly chop walnuts and add, with the stilton, to the soft cheese mixture. Season with black pepper but don't oversalt.
7. Roll out half of the pastry into a circle to fit base and sides of a deep, loose-bottomed 9"(23cm) pie tin. Trim edge and reserve trimmings.
8. Spoon in the filling and level the top.
9. Roll out remaining pastry to make a lid, fix to base with a little water and trim away any excess.
10. Re-roll trimmings and cut out leaf and stem shapes. Arrange on the pie crust and fix with a little water. Beat remaining egg and glaze top.
11. Cook at 190°C Gas5 for 45 mins or until pastry is rich golden brown. Leave to cool in the tin.
12. Remove from tin to a plate and garnish with watercress and slices of red apple and celery.

Brown Rice Salad from Gill Thomas

Serves 6

- 6 oz brown rice
- 6 spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 oz currants
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 2 oz roasted cashew nuts, halved
- 2 tbsp sunflower seeds
- 6 tbsp soy sauce dressing (recipe below)
- 3 tbsp parsley, chopped

Cook the rice in boiling water for 30mins, rinse and drain well. Transfer to a bowl while still warm and add remaining ingredients.

Soy dressing

- 6 fl oz sunflower oil
- 4 tbsp dark soy sauce
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, crushed

Put all ingredients in a screw top jar and shake to mix.

Gill's notes: I don't measure anything but throw in what I've got. I also add pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, pine nuts and raisins or sultanas instead of currants. Be creative!

I sometimes find I need to add a little more dressing just before serving, since it seems to soak in rather. So, best keep some back for later use.

Mushroom Pate from Bridget

Serves 10-12 as a canapé

- 250g mushrooms
- 30g butter
- 3-4 garlic cloves, peeled & finely chopped
- 250g cream cheese
- Salt & black pepper

1. Clean, trim and chop mushrooms
2. Heat butter in large frying pan
3. Saute mushrooms and garlic for 10mins or until all moisture has evaporated
4. Cool
5. Blitz mixture until smooth then add the cream cheese. Blitz again until well blended
6. Season to taste then cool completely
7. Refrigerate for at least an hour for the garlic flavour to develop
8. Serve on crostini or triangles of toast

Keeps in the fridge for up to a week

HAVE A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND ALL GOOD WISHES FOR 2024