

Round and About in the Parish

As we approach the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II it was suggested to compare how we were in 1952 and how we are now. Surprisingly, to be so exact on the timings, was not the easiest of tasks.

By a stroke of luck, I came across an old WI scrapbook which has a group photo of its members outside Infield - as shown here. This was taken to celebrate the 90th birthday party for Mrs Nugent Harris, and was given at the home of Mrs Fox, [Infield] who was the local President.



Left to Right, front row. Mrs Etherton, Mrs Scutt, Lady Cecil, Mr Nugent Harris. Mrs Nugent Harris, Mrs Fox, Mrs Elphick, Miss Langridge and Mrs Marten. Other members are not named.

Alice Margaret Fox and Graham Laidler Fox lived in Hampstead Garden Suburb and when this was flattened during WWII they decided to move to the country. Around 1944 they bought Infield. There was no mains water and they had to pump the water from two surface wells - hence the outside privy. Graham, among many other tasks, audited the Danehill and Chelwood Gate WI's accounts and woe betide the Treasurer if they weren't correct.

Following the death of George VI, the WI wrote to Clarence House in 1952 and the reply was as follows "The Private Secretary is commanded by The Queen to thank the members of the Danehill and Chelwood Gate Women's Institute for their kind message of sympathy, which Her Majesty much appreciates.



CLARENCE HOUSE,
ST. JAMES'S

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11th February, 1952.

While the Danehill and Chelwood Gate WI is no longer in existence, the Ashdown WI, which covers the same area of Danehill and Chelwood Gate (and beyond) continues. The Danehill branch used to meet in the afternoons while the Ashdown branch meets in the evenings .



Ashdown WI was formed in 1974 by Lucille Burnham and to celebrate her 100th birthday a special party was held for her. Former members who had moved away came back (one made a round trip of 200 miles) specially for this occasion. (photo above). To commemorate the year 2000 the WI presented a Millennium bench at the junction of Tanyard Lane with the inscription “Presented by Ashdown WI”

The WI have only recently started to meet again following a two-year gap because of Covid-19. As I write this in early April the numbers getting Covid are at the highest rate they have ever been, but despite this our numbers are starting to get back to pre-pandemic levels and you can be assured of a warm welcome at our meetings.

My thanks to Malcolm and Rosemary Burwood , Yvonne Smith and the late Mary Benson. J

ill Rolfe