

East Farndon Women's Institute 1933 -2016

The Women's Institute (W I) was formed nationally in 1915. Its intention was originally to revitalise rural communities and encourage women to become more involved in producing food during the First World War. Since then, the organisation's aims have broadened and the W I is now the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK.

The W I started its group in East Farndon with a committee meeting held on April 5th 1933, and the first meeting took place on April 12th. This anniversary was celebrated every year with a birthday party, later to become a meal out.

The group met in the village hall, which was originally an old building on the site of the present village hall, on the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30 to 9.45 pm. The meetings always started with the singing of Jerusalem. Meetings continued throughout World War II, which shows the importance of them. The group continued until 2021, when it folded due to dwindling numbers.

The original minute books have been archived by the W I in Northampton, however the East Farndon group kindly allowed me access to them before this happened. I felt it was important to document them because the minutes of the meetings are such a rich source of social history. This is not only interesting to read now, but will also be interesting for future generations.

The talks and demonstrations at the meetings were varied and interesting, covering a broad range of subjects. The competitions were fun and the members enjoyed many trips and meals out.

An annual subscription was paid by members and they also raised funds by holding events such as raffles, whist drives, rummage sales and coffee mornings. The earliest reference to the amount paid in subs is in 1981, when they were raised to £2.75. In 1991 they were set at £7.50 and in 1994 £11.60. In 1999 they were £14.50. In 2014 they were £34.70. In 2022, the annual subscription is £44.

Over the years, the funds the members raised also supported many charities and good causes, the women giving up so much of their time to help those in need.

In 1954, the tradition of presenting members with birthday posies was introduced, and this carried on until 1993, when cards were given instead. Cards were also sent to members for significant life events, such as golden or diamond wedding anniversaries.

Having read the minute books, what comes across is meetings full of friendship, fun and laughter; an interest in learning new skills, visiting different places and listening to interesting talks; a strong sense of helping those less fortunate. They also had a deep respect for each other, sending fruit and flowers to members who were ill or bereaved, and the ladies always stood in a minute's silence when a member passed away.

I have photographed each page and have put them together in chronological years, with an overview of each of the years below. Photographs of the original entries are available to read on Google Drive – please follow the links.

Judy Hodgetts, March 2022

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1933 -1935

36 women joined as members at the first meeting in April 1933 and by 1934 this number had risen to 44. At the initial meeting it was decided to hold a whist drive to raise funds.

Interesting talks over these years included slipper making, basket making, cake icing and First Aid. Competitions included a sweet competition, a roses and vegetable competition and a bulb competition, with all the bulbs being deep blue.

The group supported lots of good causes: the potatoes grown for the Kettering Show were given to the Cottage Hospital, the members helped the unemployed by making clothes in any way they could, they held rummage sales to help the Girl Guides and the Drama class, they held socials to support the School and Nursing Fund, a dance to raise funds for the Cottage Hospital and a whist drive in aid of the District Nursing Fund and school playground, which raised £2. 6 shillings.

The 1st birthday party was held in April 1934 and included sketches, games, dancing and refreshments. A cake was shared and the meeting was closed with the singing of the National Anthem.

In June 1935 the monthly meeting was held at The Orchards, Main Street by kind permission of Mrs Cox, and 37 members attended. Mrs Cox was married to Freddie Cox, who was the managing director of R & W H Symington, the corset factory in Market Harborough. Meetings continued at The Orchards in June for many years, held in the garden, weather permitting.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1936 – 1939

These entries include details about the planting of the beech tree at the top of the village, which was to commemorate the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (see separate article on the village website). As the tree was planted, Reverend Merriman said he hoped the children would be as loyal to George VI as older people had been to his father George V, and most W I members put in a spadeful of soil.

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 17 to 45.

Demonstrations included care of the feet, folk dancing and a talk by Cadbury's. Outings included one to Bournville and to East Langton Grange, where the members were entertained by Captain and Mrs Hignett (W I President). They played clock golf and croquet, were entertained by the Hignett's children and had tea in the Rose Garden.

In 1936 it was proposed that membership was open to women from age 14.

A whist drive was held for repairs to the school playground, and this raised £3 8s 6d

The members also knitted squares and made articles of children's clothing for the Personal Service League (created to help the needy and unemployed).

The entries also include the start of World War II in September 1939, and at this point meetings were switched to afternoons, 2.30 to 4.30. In December 1939 it was decided to knit garments to send to the men from the village who were away fighting. The secretary of the village hall was asked if the room could be used by the refugees and discussions were held on how the W I could entertain them. In the entry dated Dec 6th 1939, a whist drive was proposed to raise funds for the W I, but under moonlight as the village hall had no blackout curtains.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1940 – 1945

These minute books were kept during the entirety of World War II, and it's interesting to see that the Women's Institute continued to meet through all the adversity. The number of members attending meetings ranged from 6 to 21.

Throughout the war, the monthly meetings continued in the usual way, with demonstrations on war time cookery and recipes, and a film show by Cadbury's among many events. They continued with the potato growing competitions (the potatoes were then donated to the Cottage Hospital) and they held a produce show in the village hall. The W I birthday party was still celebrated each April with sketches, games, competitions and refreshments.

East Farndon W I continued to raise funds for needy causes in what must have been very difficult times. The members knitted 38 pairs of socks, which were sent to the Merchant Navy; they collected silver paper and aluminium, which was sent off; they held whist drives and a door-to-door collection for the Soldier Comfort Fund; they continued to send knitted goods and money to the men from the village who were serving; they bought cigarettes for members of the Home Guard as Christmas gifts.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1946 – 1949

Throughout these years the members continued to raise money for many good causes through raffles, whist drives and rummage sales. A concert in 1946 raised £15 10s 0d for Northamptonshire Blind.

The number of members attending meetings ranged from 11 to 27.

Each year the June meeting was held at The Orchards at the invitation of Mrs Cox.

An annual produce show was held each year, with the money raised from the sale of the fruit and vegetables going to good causes.

In 1946 £10 was given to village members of the Forces as a Christmas gift.

The birthday party was held each April, with sketches, games and refreshments and the money raised continued to be donated to the Rosemary Guild.

Demonstrations included glove making and rug making among many others and competitions included articles in a match box, best potato dish and plain scones.

Gifts of flowers, plants or baskets of fruit were sent to members who were unwell.

In July 1948 East Farndon W I gave 5 shillings to the National W I, who asked for this donation towards a gift for Princess Elizabeth. Presumably this was for a present for her forthcoming baby as Prince Charles was born in November 1948.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1950 – 1953

Throughout these years, the number of members attending meetings ranged from 20 to 38. The W I members continued to raise money through raffles, whist drives and rummage sales for good causes including Denman College (W I Headquarters), Northamptonshire Blind, Dr Bernardo's and Cancer Campaign.

Talks included care of the hair, First Aid and there was a film show by British Railways. There was also a talk on Bermuda and Jamaica given by Lady Northampton and there was a talk on the ceremony of the Coronation given in May 1953.

Demonstrations included wool rugs, making lampshades and patchwork. Outings for members included a trip to Bourneville, the Handicrafts Show and the Royal Tournament. Competitions included best posy and best flower button hole.

As in previous years, the June meetings were held at The Orchards, East Farndon by invitation from Mrs Cox.

Members organised the annual Flower Show in the village hall and also the annual Produce Show, which had become the Produce and Needlework Show.

On Wednesday 13th February 1952 the members stood in a minute's silence in memory of the late King George VI.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1954- 1955

During these years the members of the W I continued to hold raffles, whist drives and rummage sales to finance the group and also to raise money for good causes such as Cancer Campaign, St Dunstan's and Northamptonshire Blind.

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 23 to 41.

Film shows at the meetings included one of the Coronation and a cookery film from Be-Ro.

Talks and demonstrations included palmistry, basket making, loose covers, sweet making, make-up and miniature rock gardens.

Competitions included something new out of something old and six best scones.

The annual birthday parties in April continued to be huge, well-attended events, with a cake and entertainment. Raffle prizes included two and a half pounds of butter.

The Produce and Needlework shows continued in August. In 1954 there were 177 entries, with 162 in 1955.

Christmas parties for the village children were organised each year, with games, refreshments, a present from underneath the Christmas tree and a packet of sweets.

A trip to the pantomime at Coventry Hippodrome was arranged for January 1956.

Birthday posies were introduced in 1954 and baskets of fruit continued to be sent to members who were unwell.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1956 -1957

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 24 to 42.

Demonstrations in these years included dressmaking, savoury snacks and decorating Christmas cakes. Talks included 'children's toys through the ages' and film shows included one on America.

The group continued to have strong connections with local groups, particularly Marston Trussell and Clipston. They also had a link with a group in Australia, who in 1957 sent them three letters and a cookery book.

They also continued to hold whist drives and rummage sales to raise funds for the W I and also for good causes.

The Produce and Handicraft Show was held in August each year. In 1956 there were 264 entries, with 273 in 1957. It was decided to give an engraved cup to the overall winner.

The W I birthday party was still celebrated each April, with sketches, games, refreshments and a cake. The ladies also continued to organise a Christmas party in the village hall for the village children, with games, refreshments, a present and a packet of sweets.

The trips to see the pantomime at Coventry Hippodrome also continued.

In 1957, evening classes to learn dressmaking were set up for members.

Also in 1957, the Church Roof Committee asked to borrow the W I's gramophone, and it was agreed that they could, at a charge of 1 shilling per hour!

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1958 – 1959

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 22 to 40.

The group continued to maintain strong links with other groups, particularly Marston Trussell, Clipston, Kelmarsh and their link in Australia.

Trips during these years included the pantomime in Coventry and Cadbury's. Demonstrations included Easter cookery, sweet making, floral art and home decorating. Film shows included one from the Cotton Board, one from Singer Sewing Machines and a travel film given by British Railways. Competitions included 'ourselves when young', best decorated Easter egg and home-grown potatoes. Talks included one on protective measures to adopt in the event of nuclear warfare.

The ladies continued to hold raffles, whist drives and rummage sales to raise funds for the group and good causes, which included Cancer Campaign and St Dunstan's Blind.

The Produce and Handicraft Show was held each year, with 240 exhibits in 1958 and 281 in 1959 (a record).

In April 1958, the 25th anniversary party was held in the village hall. Nearly 100 members plus guests sat down to a "beautifully prepared meal". Dancing, games, a film show and a sketch by the Baptist Ladies Meeting followed.

The first Handicraft and Cookery Show was held in East Farndon in May 1958.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1960 -1961

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 18 (the lowest attendance for many years due to an epidemic of colds in the village) to 36.

Film shows during these years included carpet weaving and the care of carpets, Ceylon and the forests of Africa. Demonstrations included cookery, a dress show with models and Old English and American folk songs. Talks included 'your meat and how to choose it', cacti and herbaceous borders.

Competitions included best dressed clothes peg, best holiday snapshot, autumn fruits and leaves and best covered coat hanger. The potato competition was won by Mrs Piggin, who grew 10.5 pounds from one potato!

The members continued to hold whist drives and rummage sales to support the group and good causes, including Cancer Fund, St Dunstan's and the World Refugee Fund. Members were reminded to keep saving bottle tops for Dogs for the Blind.

The annual birthday parties were celebrated each April with cake, refreshments, dancing and games. The annual Christmas parties for the village children were also held in the village hall.

The Produce and Handicraft Shows were held each August, with 324 entries in 1960 and 275 in 1961.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1962 - 1963

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 31 to 50.

Talks during these years included: ideas for Christmas presents, a representative from Boots talking about make-up, making lampshades, washing machines and making feather hats. Demonstrations included cookery, Dorset feather stitching and cake icing and sandwiches by a representative from Stork Margarine. Film shows included one from British Railways about Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Competitions included: best knitted square, best bowl of bulbs, best hand-made lampshade, best machine-made apron and best pair of ankles!

The annual birthday parties were held each April, with the usual cake, refreshments, games, dancing and sketches. Christmas parties for the village children were also organised.

The Produce and Handicraft Show in August had 330 entries in 1960 and 342 in 1961.

Funds for the group and for good causes continued to be raised by whist drives and bring and buy sales.

There were also the annual trips to Coventry Theatre.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1964 – 1965

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 26 to 48.

During these years, demonstrations included Christmas decorations and flower arranging. Films shown included one from Crown Wallpaper, a travel film about the Philippines, Holland and Belgium and one on cooking various joints of pork. There were talks on costume jewellery, soft toys and handbags.

Competitions included: most articles in a matchbox, best pot plant, six jam tarts and best manicured nails.

The Produce and Handicraft shows continued to be successful each August, with 296 entries in 1964 and 282 in 1965.

The annual birthday parties and children's Christmas parties were also held each year.

The members continued to raise funds for the group and charities through raffles, whist drives and bring and buy sales.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1966 – 1967

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 30 to 48.

Talks during these years included care of pets, the history of East Farndon and decorating houses. Among the demonstrations were ones on cookery and fresh ideas for tea, and a dress show took place. Films included the union of South Africa, travel in Greece, France, Canada and Japan and the birth control pill.

Competitions included a floral competition depicting a song title. "Tulips in Amsterdam" was the winner.

The Produce and Handicraft shows in August attracted 217 entries in 1966 and 198 in 1967.

Keep Fit classes started for members.

The annual children's parties were held as usual and both the W I birthday parties were held at Springfield Lodge, Great Bowden, where they had a sit-down meal.

The members continued to raise funds for the group and for various charities through whist drives and bring and buy sales. They also raised money through coffee mornings held at the Old Grammar School in Market Harborough and by holding coffee evenings in members' houses.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1968 – 1971

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 16 (due to very bad weather – the minimum was around 25) to 42.

The members continued to raise funds for the group and to support charities such as Cancer Campaign, St Dunstan's Blind and the Windward Isles Clothing Scheme through coffee mornings, whist drives and rummage sales. They also baked and provided afternoon tea for the elderly residents of Lenthall House, Market Harborough.

Talks during these years included ones on home-made wine making, cookery, Gartree Prison, nursing and hairdressing with the use of models. Demonstrations included hand-made rugs, cheeses, making Christmas crackers and a beauty evening. Films included cancer information and the training of police dogs.

Competitions included growing a hyacinth, Christmas table decorations and making a necklace from berries.

The annual birthday party was held at The Angel in Market Harborough in 1968, in the village hall in 1969, at Springfield Lodge, Great Bowden in 1970 and in 1971 it was decided to have a trip out instead. The members went to Coventry Theatre to see Jimmy Tarbuck and Moira Anderson.

Other trips out included the new Police Station, "Oliver" at Northampton Repertory Theatre, a cookery demonstration at the Gas Board in Leicester and a trip to see Ken Dodd at Coventry Theatre.

The ladies continued with the annual Christmas party for the children in the village hall, with refreshments, games, fancy dress and a present from under the tree.

The Produce and Handicrafts shows were also put on in August, with entries down in 1968, 218 in 1969, 201 in 1970 and 276 in 1971.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1972 – 1974

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 20 to 38.

Talks and demonstrations throughout these years included one on wigs, a talk by a radiographer from the Infirmary, Leicester, glass blowing, corn dollies, winter flower arrangements, painting in oils, a demonstration by "Kake Brand" on decorating cakes and making Easter eggs, a fashion show and a talk by the Samaritans.

Trips out included one to Littlewoods in Leicester and another to Coventry Theatre to see Peters and Lee.

The members continued to arrange whist drives and bring and buy sales to raise funds for the group and for charities. They also arranged several Barn Dances in the village hall.

The Produce and Handicraft shows continued each August. Entries were down in 1972 and were not specified for 1973 and 1974.

In 1972 the annual birthday party in April was a social event in the village hall plus a trip to Coventry Theatre. In 1973 a Barn Dance was held in the village hall and the members and their guests were entertained by Mr Stocker and his Bluebirds, a trio of singers and guitar players. In 1974, the party was held in the village hall and the East Farndon Drama Group entertained the members with a play.

The initiative "Plant a Tree for 73" was discussed and it was agreed to plant a tree in the new churchyard, although it's not specified which species of tree and where it was planted.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1975 – 1977

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 20 to 37.

Talks and demonstrations throughout these years included ceramic pottery, Victorian dolls, how to cook Cornish pasties and other Cornish dishes and a fashion show. Film shows included the quieter side of America, old Market Harborough, Australia and historic buildings of Greece.

The group maintained strong links with other local groups, often visiting their meetings, and there was a trip to a fashion show in Northampton.

The members continued to raise funds for the group and various charities through jumble sales, whist and beetle drives and carol concerts. Among the charities they supported were Marie Curie Nursing Amenities Fund and the Multiple Sclerosis Society. They carried on with the tradition of sending flowers to members who were unwell. They also continued providing afternoon tea for the elderly residents of Lenthall House and St Luke's Hospital in the village hall.

They held a sponsored knit to provide knitted knee caps for the elderly.

The Produce and Handicraft shows were held each August. The entries for 1975 and 1976 were unspecified, but there were over 300 in 1977.

The annual birthday parties were held in April in the village hall. In 1975, the members were entertained by the drama group, in 1976 by Mr Stocker and his wife, who organised games and dancing. In 1977, a whist drive and beetle drive were held after the meal.

Christmas parties were held for the members each year, with food, music and dancing. Parties were also held for the village children.

East Farndon W I won the Mercury and Herald Literary Cup for 1976/77 with the submission of an essay by Mrs Capell.

In 1977 they held a photographic competition to capture the village's Silver Jubilee celebrations.

The members also had the opportunity to contribute to the W I Queen's Silver Jubilee Fund in the form of a craft sale in Debenhams, Oxford Street, London in October 1977.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Books 1978 -1980

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 16 to 37.

In 1978, members from a Dutch W I were visiting Knuston Hall, Wellingborough and the East Farndon W I was asked to entertain members in their own homes and to invite them to a meeting. They were invited to Knuston Hall as a thank you.

Competitions throughout these years included: home-made cheesecake, best decorated egg, a party hat, a buttonhole suitable for a winter wedding and a Valentine card.

Talks and demonstrations included a fashion show, a talk by Waitrose on how a supermarket is organised, the making of cut-glass ornaments, Scottish dancing and four recipes using Avocado Pears.

Film shows included one on Guide dogs and puppy walking.

Trips out included one to Church's China shop in Northampton.

The members entered a rounders tournament, and they continued to arrange jumble sales, whist drives and carol services to raise funds for the group and for charities.

The Produce and Handicraft shows continued each August.

The annual birthday parties each April were held in the village hall. In 1978, the members also had a trip to Northampton. In 1979, the members enjoyed sherry and cake, a choir and the reading of a ghost story. In 1980, they enjoyed eating and drinking and were entertained by Mr Stocker and his wife, who organised the dancing.

Christmas parties were held in the village for members and also for the village children.

The members continued to provide afternoon tea for the elderly residents of Lenthall House and St Luke's Hospital.

In 1980/81 the annual subscription was increased to £2.75

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Books 1981 – 1983

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 17 to 35.

During these years, coffee and sherry evenings and afternoon teas were held for the elderly, the drama group was re-formed and the members continued to hold coffee mornings and jumble sales to raise funds for the group and for good causes.

Talks and demonstrations included one on poisonous plants, basket making, fondant icing, flower arranging, the history of crochet and astrology. Competitions included best table decoration, three small fancy cakes and an unusual stone.

The annual birthday parties were held in the village hall in 1981 and 1982. In 1981, the members were entertained with songs sung to a guitar, a recital of poems and readings and a buffet. In 1982 they played games and had competitions before sherry and cake. 1983 was the 50th birthday party (Golden Jubilee). Former members who had moved away were invited for a social event. A meal was enjoyed at the Angel Hotel, Market Harborough.

The Produce and Handicraft Show was held each August. In 1981 there were 257 entries.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Books 1984 – 1987

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 10 to 22, although numbers weren't always recorded.

Throughout these years the members continued to support Lenthall House by arranging sherry and coffee evenings and afternoon teas for the elderly residents.

They also carried on arranging rummage and bring and buy sales to raise funds for the group and for various charities.

Talks and demonstrations included one from a butcher ("a butcher by trade, but a comedian by nature"), one from the Police on the safety of women, decorated eggs, a history of clocks, Gartree prison, Inn signs dating back to the 16th century and glass engraving for a hobby. There was a film show about Battersea Dogs Home.

Competitions include an ornamental bell, a four-inch miniature arrangement, a drawn inn sign and novelty tea spoon.

Trips out included the Bull's Head at Clipston, one to British Home Stores evening event and one to the Garden Festival in Stoke-on-Trent.

The Produce and Handicraft Show continued each August. There were 101 entries in 1986 and 175 in 1987.

The annual birthday parties in April were celebrated in the village hall in 1984 and 1985, with sherry, cake, film slides and games. A meal was arranged at the Bull's Head, Clipston in 1986 and at the Angel Hotel, Market Harborough in 1987.

The Christmas parties were changed to a meal out, rather than the village hall.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Books 1988 – 1990

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 11 to 18.

During these years, talks and demonstrations included the history of the Red Cross, osteopathy, doll making, the history and use of herbs, Lancôme make-up, Loros Hospice and myths and legends of Northamptonshire.

Competitions included an Easter bonnet, a piece of Victoriana, an old photo of East Farndon, an old tea spoon and six iced biscuits.

Trips out included an evening walk in Leicester, a canal walk and a walk at Foxton.

The Produce Show was held each year, but it was decided to scale them down. 1988 saw 99 entries, 1989 had 112 and 1990 had fewer than the previous year.

The annual birthday parties in April were celebrated with meals out. In 1988 it was at the Bull's Head in Clipston, in 1989 the Countryman Inn, Great Bowden and in 1990 it was held at the Red Lion in Sibbertoft.

The Christmas meals out also continued.

The members continued to hold rummage sales and carol concerts to raise funds for the group and for various charities.

The Women's Institute's 75th anniversary took place in June 1990 and East Farndon members held a tea party in a member's garden to celebrate. They all supplied "tea for one".

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1991 – 1994

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 11 to 17, although numbers weren't always recorded.

Throughout these years, the annual subscription changed to £7.50 in 1991, to £10.50 in 1993 and to £11.60 in 1994.

Talks and demonstrations included gold necklaces, a talk from the local philatelic society, gliding, old garden roses, weather forecasting and Guide Dogs for the Blind. In 1993, it was the group's 60th year of association with Guide Dogs for the Blind and the members continued to save used postage stamps, milk bottle tops and foil containers to raise money for them.

Competitions included a button hole spray, three fancy cakes, largest number of used postage stamps collected, last rose of summer and a piece of china with a rose pattern.

Trips out included ones to Boughton House, McVities Biscuit Factory, Calke Abbey and Uppingham School.

The members continued to organise rummage sales, coffee mornings, afternoon teas and carol concerts to raise funds for the group and for charities, including the Red Cross and League of Friends.

The annual birthday parties in April were celebrated by meals out. In 1991 at the Queen's Head Inn, Sutton Bassett and in 1992 at the Tollemache Arms, Harrington. In 1993 the group celebrated their 60th anniversary. They held a meal at the Black Horse Inn, Foxton. A newspaper photographer came along to take photos. It transpired that the TV actor Bill Maynard was having a drink in the next room, and he joined them and cut the cake! In 1994 they enjoyed a meal at the Red Lion, Sibbertoft.

The Produce Show was held each August, but in 1993 it was decided to no longer invite the village to this event. There were 132 entries in 1991, 84 in 1992 and the entries weren't specified for 1993. (It wasn't held in 1994 because the new village hall was being built).

The group continued to go out for a Christmas meal and they also carried on with the tradition of sending flowers to members who were unwell. The tradition of giving members birthday posies, which had started in 1954, changed to giving birthday cards instead in 1993.

On March 9th 1994, the members held their final meeting in the old village hall. It was demolished at the end of April and the building of a new village hall started. In the meantime, meetings were held at different venues, including Great Oxendon W I, Harborough Museum (including a tour), a visit to Temptations Cheese Shop and the use of the Girl Guide's Hall.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1995 – 1998

The number of members attending each meeting ranged from 12 to 16, although these were the only two references to numbers that were recorded.

January 1995 saw the first meeting in the new village hall. Subs were £12 per annum, and this rose to £12.50 in 1996 and £13 in 1997.

Talks and demonstrations in these years included ones on spinning wool, flower arranging, crime and safety, India, interior design, badgers, stately homes and castles, Victorian handicrafts and holistic therapies.

Competitions included a knitted square, a peg doll, small flower arrangement, the last rose of summer and six cheese straws.

Trips out included Littlewoods Fashion Show in Northampton, Billing Garden Centre and the Helicopter Base at Sulby.

The birthday anniversaries were celebrated by a meal out. In 1995 and 1996 the members went to the Red Lion in Sibbertoft, in 1997 and 1998 (the 65th anniversary), they went to Welland Lodge.

Members continued to arrange rummage sales, beetle drives, quizzes and carol concerts to raise funds for the group and for charities such as the League of Friends, the Blind Association and LOROS. They also continued to give afternoon tea to the elderly residents of Lenthall House.

The Produce Show was held each year in the village hall. There were not many vegetable entries in 1995 due to the drought, 112 entries in 1996 and unspecified entries in 1997 and 1998.

The members continued to enjoy a Christmas meal each year.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 1999 – 2003

The number of members attending each meeting wasn't recorded in the minutes.

In 1999 the annual subscription was £14.50, raised to £15.50 in 2000.

Talks and demonstrations during these years included ones on encaustic art with wax, the Yorkshire Dales, reminiscences of a Land Army girl, flower arranging, the history of canals and a travel show on Guernsey and the Isle of Man.

In February 2000, Alan Langley gave a talk on the research he'd done on East Farndon dating from the 18th century, how the village had changed, newspaper reports on events and slides of houses that had since been demolished. His talk was very well received.

Competitions included growing a hyacinth bulb, a landscape photograph, a paper rose, a floral arrangement in an egg cup, last rose of summer, prettiest thimble, a seascape photograph and a decorated egg.

Trips out included an evening walk in Brixworth Country Park and a visit to Market Harborough Flower Club.

The annual birthdays were celebrated by meals out. In 1999 and 2000 at the Old Red Lion in Clipston, in 2001 at the Coach and Horses in Lubenham, in 2002 at the Bull's Head in Clipston and in 2003 (the 70th anniversary) at the Three Swans in Market Harborough.

The members continued with raffles and rummage sales to raise funds and to support charities.

The tradition of a Christmas meal out continued.

The strong links with local W I groups continued, often attending each other's meetings.

The Produce Show was held each August, with the judges commenting on the high standard of the entries.

In 1999, it was decided to give the village spring a "face lift" and the Parish Council was approached. They agreed, offering financial help. The members carried out the work themselves in May 2000 (see separate article on the village spring on the East Farndon website). Spring bulbs were planted around the spring in October 2001.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 2004 – 2007

The number of members attending each meeting was not recorded in the minute books during these years.

Subscriptions were £20 in 2004, £21 in 2005, £22 in 2006 and then they were increased to £26 in 2007. The members wrote to the W I complaining at the steep increase, but although the W I was sympathetic, the increase remained.

Talks, demonstrations and films included aviation in Leicester, the history of the National Trust, signatures and handwriting, the Yorkshire Dales, a glass workshop, sugar craft, running the Heart Foundation charity shop, wild flowers along the banks of Leicester canal, Lamport Hall and Market Harborough in bloom.

Trips out included walks around Medbourne and Hallaton and a quiz at Wicksteed Park.

Competitions included an arrangement in an egg cup, an animal made from fruit or veg, a pretty scarf, the last rose of summer, a collage from sweet papers and an old picture of Market Harborough.

The members continued to raise money from raffles, rummage sales and cake making, to raise funds for the group and for charities including Cynthia Spencer Hospice and Air Ambulance. Funds were tight during these years and in 2007 the Parish Council paid 10 month's village hall rent to help the group out. The PCC also made a donation to the group.

The birthday parties were celebrated with meals out. In 2004 at the Stag's Head, Maidwell, in 2005 at the Swan Inn, Braybrooke and in 2006 at the Red Lion, Clipston.

The members continued to enjoy Christmas meals out.

The Produce Show was organised in the village hall each August.

In 2004, the members took part in the Garden Bird Watch organised by the RSPB.

In 2004, Mrs Capell, aged 89 and a long-standing W I member, presented the group with a table cloth that she had embroidered with the name of every member of East Farndon W I from 1933 to 2003. This was to celebrate 70 years.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 2008 – 2011

The number of members attending each meeting wasn't recorded in the minute books.

The annual subscription was set at £27 in 2008, rising to £29.50 in 2010. Funds were raised through various activities including rummage sales, craft fairs and raffles, and the PCC also made a donation to the group. Charities supported included Cynthia Spencer Hospice, Northampton Hospice and Air Ambulance.

Talks and demonstrations throughout these years included a display of spoons, a talk from Rainbow Hospice, slides of Kathmandu, a talk on digital cameras, Althorp House, reflexology, oil painting, beading, nutrition, dreams and their meanings and the history of Rockingham Castle.

Competitions included a handmade Easter bag, unusual soap, prettiest handkerchief, a decorative button and a picture of the moon and stars.

Trips out included one to hear Ann Widdicombe speak, an Old Time Music Hall in Desborough and evening walks around Husbands Bosworth, Brixworth and Arthingworth.

The annual birthday was celebrated with meals out. In 2008 (the 75th anniversary) at the Angel Hotel, Market Harborough. All members were presented with a china trinket box as a memento. In 2009 and 2010 the meal was at the Foxton Locks Inn and in 2011 it was at the Coach and Horses, Lubenham.

The Produce Show was held each August in the village hall and judged categories included cookery, handicrafts, photography, flowers and vegetables.

The members enjoyed a Christmas meal at various restaurants.

East Farndon Women's Institute Minute Book Entries 2012 – 2016

This is the final minute book that was loaned to me, and ends in September 2016.

The number of members attending each meeting wasn't recorded in the minute books.

Annual subscriptions were £33 in 2013 and £34.70 in 2014.

In 2012, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond anniversary and the London Olympics, a baton was passed around all the W I groups in Northamptonshire during the months leading up to the events. The baton was an Indian silver scroll and was received in East Farndon on May 18th. The baton was passed on to Braybrooke W I on May 19th. To get there, the ladies used a tractor-trailer, which was fitted with seats. They decorated it and dressed up themselves.

During these years, talks and demonstrations included hearing dogs, Air Ambulance, history of the telephone box, the life of a farmer's wife, a trip down memory lane and representatives from the RNLI, the Curve Theatre and the RSPB.

Competitions included a posy in a wine glass, last rose of summer, a glass ornament, an old theatre programme, a book mark, an ash tray and a pressed flower.

Trips out included a walk around Brixworth Country Park and a trip to see Calendar Girls.

On 4th June 2015 a film show was held at Harborough Theatre to celebrate the W I movement's centenary.

The members continued to raise funds for the group and for charities through rummage sales, coffee mornings and raffles.

The annual birthdays were celebrated each April with a meal out. In 2012 at the Foxton Locks Inn, in 2013 (the 80th anniversary) at the Waterfront Restaurant, in 2014 at the Bull's Head in Clipston and in 2015 and 2016 at Market Harborough Golf Club.

The Produce Show was held in the village hall each August.