

Tetbury Advertiser – July/August 2026

Every month when I start to think about what I'm going to include in this month's article there is a huge blank – I'll usually start with whatever activity or speaker we've had at our most recent meeting and keep my fingers crossed that inspiration will flow from there. This month I'd like to start somewhere different – our members. The Women's Institute is not a political organisation, it is a campaigning one. On a personal level, we manifest a very broad spectrum of attitudes and outlooks and ages, which is clear when you listen in on our conversations over coffee at The Trouble House or The Snooty Fox, around a garden table in the sunshine over tea and crafts, or while walking the Tetbury Trail. Many of us have quite strong opinions without being opinionated and will 'hold our own' in a debate, but equally ready and open to new ideas as well as other people's beliefs. But the thing I find so attractive about our membership is the willingness and enthusiasm to engage in something new. Our speakers are varied – in the last year alone we've listened to everything from the history of tea, coloured gemstones, the challenges for farmers to War Detectives – which have concluded with some interesting question and answer sessions. But we also got out of our chairs – well obviously not when we tried chair yoga – to do circus skills and Tai Chi. We got down on our knees to learn how to use defibrillators and do effective CPR. I've loved the enthusiastic and energetic participation that was demonstrated by the membership every time, often after some initial reservations. Cyndi Lauper was right 'Girls just wanna have fun'!

We've got a very varied speaker programme planned right through to next year. We're going to try our hands at handbells at Christmas and we've thought we might try a Silver Swans ballet class too as well as African drumming – hopefully something for everyone alongside the activities of the smaller groups.

So an evening of Line Dancing was guaranteed to bring out the 'Yee Haw' in us, however many left feet we might have individually. I recognise that not everyone feels physically able to join in evenings like these, but 'spectator sport' can be just as rewarding. Our thanks are due to Gillian Butler of 'twoleftfeetdancing' for a brilliant evening. Whether there were any Stetsons or cowboy boots in evidence, I'll just point you to the photographic evidence. At least a still photo can't tell on the people who turned left when everyone else was turning right – you know who you are!

We'll be welcoming Chris Mapp at our meeting on 13 July speaking on 'Britain's Lost Children – The Home Project' and the next coffee morning at The Snooty Fox will be at 10.30 on Monday 27 July.

Rowena Palser

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