

WI NEWSLETTER



HAPPY HALLOWEEN MONTH!

Well, here we are in October, having got through 6 months of the strangest of times. The Covid-19 virus pandemic has affected every one of us in one way or another; it has brought out the best and the worst of the world; amazing things have been achieved through the use of technology and many have found hitherto unknown joy and solace in their gardens. I read today that applications for a horticultural college have soared, so much so that they have not enough gardens on their books in which to train their students! I hope you enjoy the Quiz included, it shouldn't be too taxing, but reminds us of some of the amazing women there are and have been in the world! Answers next week!



My 2019 'Grandson' Pumpkins!



Tracy Williams' crocheted pumpkins!



Mosaic Pumpkin



ain is a time to remember our
but not to mourn them,
rather to embrace their spirits
and let their wisdom help guide u
in our time here on earth

HALLOWEEN FACTS

It started as a pre-Christian Celtic festival called Samhain (Summer's End) & celebrated the final day of harvest & the crossing of spirits over into the other world.



People in Ireland, UK and Northern France would ward off ghosts by lighting a sacrificial bonfire.



JACK-O-LANTERNS

A carved Pumpkin or Turnip, its name comes from the phenomenon of a strange light flickering over peat bogs in Ireland - called Will-o-the-wisp or Jack-o-Lantern. It's also tied to the Irish legend of Stingy Jack who bargains with Satan and is doomed to roam the Earth with only a hollowed turnip to light his way - Believe what you will!!!

A message from Jean Clarke:

"I would like to thank Steeple Ashton WI for sending a card on my 90th birthday. It was a happy day despite my family not being able to come from a distance and celebrate. How lucky I am to live in such a supportive village as Steeple Ashton".

Karina Preston writes:

"I am not sure if this is of interest to W I members but I am currently touring in Northern Scotland and I am sure some of my locations might bring back memories.

On the way up I had a heavenly swim in Ullswater (I do not use a wet suit and the water was warm) A four night stay in Ullapool included a 9 mile walk to Sandwood bay beach, (just south of Cape Wrath) that can only be reached on foot. Another day a tour of spectacular mountain scenery in North Sutherland. The best ever was a trip to the Artic Convoy Museum next to Loch Ewe where ships left for Russia. My father was on the Battleship King George V (Flag Ship for the home fleet) which carried out Artic escort duties 13 times to Murmansk and Archangel.

The next day we took a ferry to the Outer Hebrides staying in Borge on Lewis for three nights. Lewis is very Barren but a walk around the Butt of Ness lighthouse and trying not to be blown over from strong winds and watching rough seas was fun. Another day was a trip down to Harris with beautiful moorland, hills and lunch on Horgabost beach with a lovely jog along the shore line. We then took a ferry to Skye staying in Ardsvar for two nights overlooking the Sound of Sleat. We then did a 6 mile walk to the pretty Fairy Pools. (Waterfalls) This morning a ferry from Armadale brings us to Mallaig and a Hotel in Morar with a fantastic sea view over white beaches. Tomorrow I am taking the train to Fort William stopping at the Glenfinnan Viaduct.

The Scots are strict with Covid rules in hotels and shops and quite a few historic places and most cafes closed. However with my friend we have had a fun time exploring the outdoors avoid contact with other people".

Regards Karina

ROASTED PUMPKIN SOUP

Serves 4

1 lge Pumpkin cut in half & seeds removed.
 1 tbsp Olive Oil
 S & P
 6 tbsp unsalted butter
 2 small shallots, chopped
 1 tsp fresh thyme, chopped
 1 ltr chicken stock
 200ml coconut milk + 200ml water
 1 tsp Cayenne pepper (add more or less, to your liking)
 1/4 tsp Nutmeg
 Pinch crushed Chilli flakes
 Fresh Pesto to serve & topping of your choice.

Pumpkin is a great source of potassium and beta-carotene, which is a carotenoid that converts to vitamin A. It also contains some minerals including calcium and magnesium, as well as vitamins E, C and some B vitamins.

**Method**

Oven to 200c

Cut Pumpkin in half or into quarters. Place on baking sheet. Rub insides with 1 tbsp Olive Oil & sprinkle with S & P. Roast for 45 mins or until it is tender. Allow to cool 5 mins. Put roasted pumpkin into food processor and puree with 200ml of chicken stock until smooth. Heat large pot over medium heat and add butter & shallots. Saute until soft. Add Thyme & cook 30 secs. Add Pumpkin puree, remaining stock, coconut milk, water, cayenne, nutmeg, maple syrup (no quantity mentioned) & crushed red chillis. Bring to low simmer for 15 - 20 mins. Ladle soup into bowls and top with Pesto.

From Bel Miller, about DOTTIE - how cute is she!

“Hi Marian a few pictures and little introduction to Dottie for newsletter.

Hi everyone I'd like to introduce you all to Dottie my cocker spaniel puppy. A few of you have already met her as I have walked her around the village fighting with lead training which I think we have now conquered!! She is 15 weeks old and enormous fun for ourselves and the grandchildren although the needle like teeth can be a problem when she manages to get hold of one of their toys which seem to be much more interesting than the ones we have bought for her. Here are a few photographs”.



From Tracy Williams - what a brave lady!

“Hi Marian,
Thought some if the ladies might be interested in the experience I had a couple of weeks ago.

Two weeks ago, as part of a surprise birthday weekend with my daughter, it was decided to attempt 'go ape' in cannock chase.

This involved a tree top assault course. After a short but thorough safety brief, we climbed 45 feet into the tree tops and navigated a course that included zip lines, Tarzan swings and swinging trapeze type swings. The harness that I wore had two karabeeners that were always attached to either the tree or the lines.

The longest zip line was 240 meters long and was fantastic (something I've always wanted to do.)

I must admit that my heart was in my mouth more than a few times but the sense of achievement and pure exhilaration more than made up for it.

With my feet now firmly back on the ground, I can ask myself... did I enjoy it? Yes. Would I do it again? NO!!”



MESSAGE FROM ALISON

Hello Ladies,

Firstly I would like to thank Marian for her hard work through this terrible period of isolation. She has gone out of her way to keep us all informed of events from Wiltshire and National HQ.

It was a pleasure to send out the latest round of certificates to our long serving members. I apologise to those who have missed out this time, but our records are not all complete and we can only go with the information we have on record. I was interested to see that HQ have now decided to design a certificate; how long has it taken them to come up with this idea? I received a 25-year one from Townswomen's Guild about 12 years ago!

If you enjoy the newsletter please help Marian by providing interesting topics to include in it. As we go into the winter months, with little sign of us getting together as a whole, please can we all think of other members, particularly the single ones, and perhaps arrange to go out for a coffee or a lunch together. I am always willing to share a game of Scrabble if anyone else is interested, I have the WI set here. Perhaps there are other group activities which could be done within the Rule of 6, e.g. Bridge, Whist, crafts. It is a shame we can't include singing in this! 😞

I am looking forward to having my second cataract op at the end of October, so will be in isolation from 13th to 28th. However, I will be here and have email and phone if needed.

I have not yet been in touch with Neem Tree Trust, but I have been busy knitting hats anyway, and I am sure they will be very grateful for them if you are able to make any.

Finally, we had suggested another Open Air meeting for 14th October in Acre Short Park. Once again this will be weather dependent, and will not go ahead if it is wet.

Best wishes to you all, Alison

I would like to add to Alison's message, but it is sad news I'm afraid. For those of you who haven't heard, one of our newest members, Pat Bonome, passed away on Thursday, 1st October, as a result of the COPD she suffered from. She had been so very careful in shielding herself during this time and had sadly not been able to join us in the park. She became unwell and went into hospital, where she died quite suddenly. Thank you to her dear friend Bel who let me know. Our thoughts go out to her family at such a sad time and I know Andrea has delivered a card for them, to be put through her door from us all at WI. Marian

MOSAICS

When Clive and I re-designed our garden, we had to dig up bags and bags of soil to get the level right. In that soil, which had been there for centuries, due to the age of the cottage, I found hundreds of pieces of broken china. Most of it was blue and white although there were some pink, red and black pieces as well. I love the blue and white china and had always wanted to make a mosaic using them so that I had something that represented part of the story of the garden.

I had no idea how to do it, but recently, having had the pieces in a box for several years, I found a lady in Chitterne, who holds mosaic workshops. So I booked on one with a friend and we attended last week. I decided to make a picture of a Hare, as I love them and had seen a picture of one in mosaic which gave me the inspiration.

It required lots of concentration and it was extremely difficult to select, cut and place the varying thicknesses & curves of china. Because I was using only two colours, blue and white, I had to be careful to choose the right depth of the blue so that the parts of the Hare would show up. Emma, of Abel Mosaics, who is a fantastically talented Mosaicist, is very patient, a good teacher and helped us with cutting techniques, colours and correct placing. We finished off the grouting at home and the picture finally came together. It may not be perfect, but I'm quite pleased with my efforts, considering it's the first time I've ever done anything like this! And it's good fun!



A brief history

A mosaic is a pattern or image made of small regular or irregular pieces of stone, glass or ceramic, held in place by mortar/plaster and covering a surface. They are often used for floor and wall decoration and were particularly popular in the ancient Roman world.

Mosaics first began in Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium BC. Pebble mosaics were made in Tiryns in Mycenaean Greece and were widespread in classical times, both in Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. Early Christian basilicas from the 4th century onwards were decorated with wall and ceiling mosaics.

Mosaic art flourished in the Byzantine empire from the 6th to the 15th centuries; that tradition was adopted by the Norman kingdom of Sicily in the 12th century, by the eastern-influenced Republic of Venice and among the Rus in Ukraine. It fell out of fashion in the Renaissance although artists like Raphael continued to practise the old technique. Roman and Byzantine influence led Jewish artists to decorate 5th & 6th century synagogues in the middle east with floor mosaics.

Mosaic was widely used on religious buildings and palaces in early Islamic art, including Islam's first great religious building, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem:



and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus:

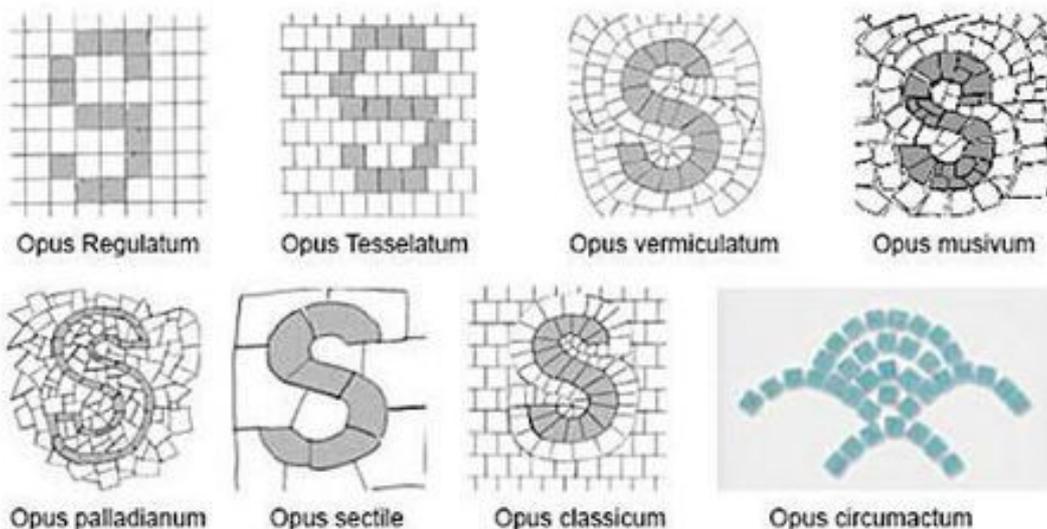


It went out of fashion in the Islamic world after the 8th century.

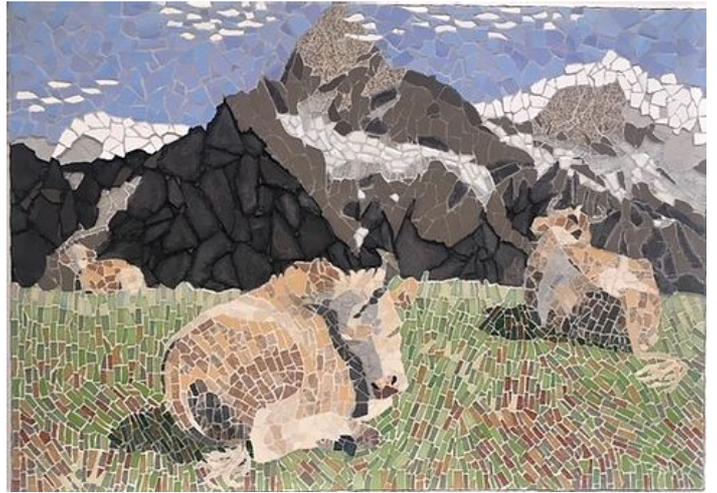
TECHNIQUES

The term used for each piece of material is 'Tessera' and there are several different techniques for laying the tesserae. They are:

- Opus regulatum: A grid; all tesserae align both vertically and horizontally
- Opus tessellatum: Tesserae from vertical or horizontal rows, but not both
- Opus vermiculatum: One or more lines of tesserae follow the edge of a special shape (letters, or a major central graphic)
- Opus musivum: Vermiculatum (a method of laying mosaic tesserae to emphasise an outline around a subject) extends throughout entire background
- Opus palladianum: Instead of forming rows, tesserae are irregularly shaped. Also known as 'crazy paving' (*the one I used!*)
- Opus sectile: A major shape (eg. Heart, letter, cat) is formed by a single tessera.
- Opus Classicum: When vermiculatum is combined with tessellatum or regulatum
- Opus circumactum: Tesserae are laid in overlapping semicircles or fan shapes
- Micromosaic: Using very small tesserae (found in Byzantine icons and Italian panels for jewellery from the Renaissance onwards).



MODERN MOSAICS





GARDENING NOTES

from Ann Hunt

We are proud of these Courgettes still flourishing in our garden on October 1st. We even picked one before we thought to take the photo. Our main Courgette bed is always set into the top of a Compost heap each year. The sunny position and electric blanket underneath always gives a generous crop. The challenge is the endless watering, picking and eating required but cropping does finish earlier than in the soil.

Our produce has been the best ever this year and we have heard others say the same. The extra time and effort made available by Lockdown has paid dividends. Our exception has been Runner Beans which despite some watering, suffered from the dry conditions meaning a very average crop. Climbing French Beans, a first time experiment were a huge success. To be recommended.

Cucumbers have been exceptional in our greenhouse since early July. Some Home Farm Close neighbours are also 'Cucumbered Out'. We picked the last two on October 4th.

Now we move on to Winter Vegetables.....Curly Kale, Cavolo Nero, Brussels Sprouts, Pointed Cabbage and Purple Sprouting, if the caterpillars keep away, and of course Parsnips, more Carrots etc .

All is looking very positive for Autumn and Winter, our efforts well rewarded. Our Mental Health is pretty good too !

