STROUD EVENING WI
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 17 | JULY 2026



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

We were delighted to welcome our speaker for the evening, **Rowen Suart**, a professional actress whose long and varied career has taken her across theatre, television, film and radio. Rowen has appeared in character roles on stages throughout the UK and on well-known television programmes including The Goodies, One Foot in the Grave and even Neighbours. Her most recent work was in 2025 in the horror film *Rumpelstiltskin*.

Alongside her acting work, she also writes, performs and produces party plays for both adults and children, and is a popular guest speaker.

Rowen entertained us with a wonderfully engaging recital of poems spanning an impressive range of writers. From the timeless words of William Shakespeare and the playful imagination of Lewis Carroll to the lyrical rhythms of Dylan Thomas and the wit of Jane Austen, her performance held the room throughout. She closed with a stirring rendition of the words to *Jerusalem*, a fitting and uplifting end to her presentation.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday **14th July**

19:30-21:30

Doors open at 19:10

Refreshments Served following our meeting.

STROUD VILLAGE HALL

Ramsdean Road

Petersfield (Stroud)

JULY

OPEN MEETING

Bring along a friend or two to see Spinnaker Shanty, a group form Gosport who will entertain us!

Theme: blue and white stripes!

Home-Start Butser

Stroud Evening WI was delighted to welcome **Lucia** from Home-Start Butser to our May meeting, where she shared an inspiring insight into the charity's vital work with families who have children under five. Having volunteered with Home-Start for the past four years, Lucia spoke with real passion about the difference the organisation has made over its 28-year history.

Home-Start Butser currently supports 262 families and 371 children across the local area, offering a wide range of services including Little Steps Family Groups, After School Clubs and Nurture Parenting Courses. At the heart of their work is parent-to-parent support, helping families facing challenges such as social isolation, poor mental health, domestic abuse, disability, housing difficulties, poverty and learning difficulties. Much of this support is delivered by trained volunteers, and Lucia emphasised how essential new volunteers are to sustaining their services. Anyone interested in getting involved can contact the charity directly on 01730 233755 or attend their AGM, usually held at Churcher's College in July. At the close of the presentation, our President was thrilled to present Lucia with a £1,000 donation from Stroud Evening WI.

Thank you so much for inviting us to talk at your meeting on Tuesday. It was lovely to meet Jenny, Leah and some of your members who were all really welcoming. And even lovelier to walk away with a cheque for £1000! Thank you so much and what a difference this will make to us. We have to raise every penny ourselves and it's very hard without this kind of support. [...]

And lastly, Jenny expressed interest in coming along to our AGM on 15th July, you would be very welcome if you can make it ☺.

Many thanks
Lucia

INVITATION

We are delighted to invite you and a guest, to Home-Start Butser's **Annual General Meeting**, taking place at **10.30am** on **15 July 2026** at **Churcher's College.**

Please join us as we reflect on our achievements from the past year, hear from a volunteer and family sharing their inspiring story, and welcome the **Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire** as our special guest! After the meeting, we hope you will stay for tea and cake. Babies are very welcome too!

Please RSVP by 6 July 2026.
With best wishes
The team at Home-Start Butser

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This contribution will help Home-Start Butser continue its wonderful work supporting families in Petersfield and the surrounding villages.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Yes, it is time to start thinking about what we want to do to celebrate the holiday season! Last year we had a wonderful afternoon tea as a change to previous evening meals out. Both are great ways to celebrate. We need **YOU** to come forward with suggestions for our upcoming celebrations. Of course, the committee would welcome help in planning this to make it more special to you and our members. Please contact a member of the committee to discuss. Our Christmas get together will be on 8th December.

40 YEARS OF WI

Many of our members have been with us since we began in November 1983. This year, joining the 40-yr club is **Eileen Tupper, Val Hart** and **Dee Wells**! In front of our monthly meeting, we were able to present Val with her certificate and a handmade embroidered card commemorating her milestone. Eileen was presented with hers by President **Jenny Milner-Smith** at her home last month. We are hoping to be able to honour Dee similarly in the coming month.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

July

7 – Committee - 7 ★ @1800

14 – "Shanties and Sea Songs" **OPEN MEETING**, Blue & White theme!

August

4 – Committee- 7 ★ @1800

11 – "A Conspiracy History of the World" with Andy Thomas **OPEN MEETING**

September

1 – Committee- 7 ★ @1800

8 – Wine tasting and cheese pairing

October

6 - Committee- 7 ★ @1800

November

3 – Committee- 7 ★ @1800

10 – Charity Fashion Show

11 – John Lewis Shopping Evening @1730

26 – Orchestra Teas @1430 - 1645

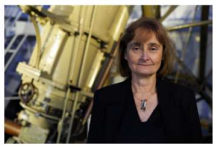


NFWI ANNUAL MEETING 2026

The NFWI Annual Meeting took place on Thursday 4 June and, for the second year running, it was held entirely online. Although we weren't able to attend virtually as a branch, one of our cohorts WIs kindly cast our vote on our behalf, ensuring our voice was still included in the national decision-making. We are very pleased to share that the meeting will return to an in-person format next year, with members gathering in Hull in 2027.

This year's programme featured an inspiring line-up of speakers. Mary Lewis opened with a thoughtful and heartfelt address, stepping in following the sad passing of Jane Goodall last year. Professor Michele Dougherty brought science to life with her bold and engaging insights, while Anne Boden, founder of Starling Bank, offered practical wisdom and encouragement during the members' Q&A. Each speaker brought something unique, and together they created a truly memorable event.







Both national resolutions—supporting women experiencing homelessness and improving access to public toilets—were passed and will now move forward as WI campaigns.

We hope this update gives you a flavour of the day, and we look forward to the WI returning to a shared, in-person meeting next year.

STROUD EVENING WI SUPPORTS PETERSFIELD ORCHESTRA ONCE AGAIN

On Thursday 18 June, the Stroud Evening WI was delighted to once again provide a full afternoon tea for the Petersfield Orchestra during their rehearsal break. Our volunteers produced a wonderful spread of sandwiches, cakes, and of course the *AMAZING* scones, which were enjoyed with great enthusiasm by the musicians.

After the concert, we received a warm message of thanks from Matthew Clark, Chair of Trustees and Concert Manager. He shared how much the players appreciated the refreshments—so much so that he barely had time to enjoy a scone himself before being called back to the podium. His note also included an apology for the new entry restrictions at the Hall and guidance for future visits, ensuring our next setup will run even more smoothly.

Most heartening of all was his invitation for us to return for the orchestra's next concert on **Thursday 26 November**, a testament to the value they place on our support and the friendly partnership that has grown over time.

A huge thank-you to all our volunteers who contributed their time, baking, and good humour. Your efforts continue to make a real difference to our local arts community.