



Surrey Federation of WIs
6 Paris, Parklands, Railton Road,
Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX.
01483 233230 info@surreyfedwi.org.uk
www.surreyfedwi.org.uk



KEEPING YOUR RECORDS - WI's ARCHIVES

Advice for Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers

What to keep

Committee Minutes	Permanently
Records of meetings	Permanently
Signed rules	Permanently
Annual Reports	Permanently
Registration Certificates	Permanently
Charity Registration Documentation	Permanently
Insurance Policies & Leases	Permanently
Scrapbooks, Photo Albums,	Permanently
Correspondence with Inland Revenue	Permanently
Correspondence with SFWI or NFWI about fundamental matters that affect the running of your WI.	5-10 years as applicable
Surrey WI News, NFWI News or your own newsletters to members	Current and previous year
Arrangements for WI Programmes	Current and previous year's Correspondence
WI Programmes	Permanently
All trivial correspondence	Dispose of when dealt with
Financial statements & Account Books	7 Years

If your Archives and other WI possessions are stored in several different places then it is sensible to make a full list of who has what. One copy of this should be kept with the Committee Minutes and each member involved should have a copy. The list should be reviewed regularly.

Notes from The Federation Archivist - Linda Oliver

Please keep all WI records in a safe, clean and dry place and **do not** use plastic bags or envelopes, as they can cause damaging conditions in which paper will degrade rapidly. Paperclips and pins should be brass to avoid rust. Acid free tissue and envelopes are available from stationers or from the suppliers listed below.

I strongly recommend that all WIs keep their Records of Meetings and Committee Minutes in loose-leaf format, thus creating a smaller volume of archives to be kept safe by your Secretary. I know that many WIs send out Minutes & Records by email and that storage on the cloud is an option, but if this is your preferred path then please take care to use strong passwords and ensure that these are recorded safely and passed on from member to member as required. My personal preference will always be for a paper record, stored in proper conditions, that will enable you to have a record of your activities to refer back to when needed, and will give you a history of your WI for future use.

During the writing of the Centenary Book and as WIs prepare to celebrate their own significant birthdays, it has become obvious that not all WIs hold complete archives. This is due to material having been lost, stolen or destroyed by fire and flood. I would like to encourage all WIs to consider sending their written archives to the Surrey History Centre. I suggest that you keep perhaps the last 10 years record & minute books, deciding at what frequency to add to the deposit.

The History Centre holds the Federation's own archive along with archive material from at least 100 suspended WIs as well as that deposited by active WIs who do not have safe storage space. Textiles and artefacts cannot be accepted. I would be very happy to help you with this and can make the deposit on your behalf, or you may make the deposit yourselves. If you choose this latter path then I would appreciate having a list of what you deposit for my records.

Scrapbooks and Photo Albums may be accepted, but with the limitations of space in the Centre's strong room, it may only be possible to deposit material which reflects the part the WI plays in community/village life, for example those scrapbooks made in 1965 for the NFWI Golden Jubilee. Scrapbooks and Photo Albums will be of much more use if pictures are all clearly captioned with names, dates and places.

WI archives stored in a village hall or a private home should be securely boxed and clearly labelled, the Federation's contact details should be clearly marked in case of need.

The Surrey History Centre is at 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, GU21 6ND
Tel. 01483 518737 Website - www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre Email - shs@surreycc.gov.uk

General Notes on Archiving

Remember that the enemies of archives are -

Dust & Dirt
Damp
Rapid changes in temperature
Light
Plastic Folders
Metals i.e. staples, pins, paperclips

Paper goes yellow when exposed to light and mouldy when damp. Dampness is normally due to poor storage conditions, but may also be caused when paper undergoes rapid changes in temperature. Staples, paperclips, treasury tags and the metal rings in ring-binders go rusty and mark the paper. Brass pins and paperclips are available from the suppliers listed. Papers should be removed from ring-binders and cardboard folders and kept in acid-free folders NOT plastic. Folders should be clearly labelled with the contents.

Ideally records should be stored in acid-free cardboard boxes, bundles of papers within may be loosely tied with unbleached cotton tape.

Photographs should NOT be stored in plastic (polyvinyl) folders. Ideally they should be in polyester film sleeves, e.g. Melinex. If this is too expensive then use clear polyester photo-mounts or acid-free folders. Try to avoid touching the shiny surface. Loose photos may be labelled on the back using a soft pencil. If you have a large quantity of good photos then an album could be created using box similar to those used for the Federation's Centenary Albums and Scrapbook. These are called Timecare boxes and are available from Preservation Equipment Ltd, contact details below. Other less expensive albums are also available from suppliers listed below.

Fabrics should be wrapped in acid-free tissue paper and kept in boxes or fabric bags made of unbleached calico or cotton, old cotton sheets and pillowcases, if washed in clear water to remove soap residue, are ideal alternatives. Rolling fabrics is better than folding them, but if items must be folded then do not always fold them the same way. Rolled items should be rolled with the stitching outwards to avoid crushing.

February 2021

Using Glue - Advice from The Women's Library

A simple paste is the best glue when sticking paper to paper, wallpaper paste is fine. Conservators prefer simple pastes with as few chemicals as possible and preferable reversible using water. For Press cutting albums you can use wheat starch paste, available from Preservation Equipment. N.B. This needs to be made up in the microwave.

Flour and Water paste works very well, try mixing ½ cup of flour with water to a suitable consistency. It does not keep very well so make up small quantities only.

Please feel free to contact me with any queries, either via the Federation office, or directly – my email is barlindo@ukgateway.net, phone 01483 772017

Listed below are some suppliers of archival stationery - details correct as at **February 2021**.

Suppliers of professional quality acid free paper, envelopes and folders are:-

Conservation by Design 9 Newmarket Court, Kingston, Milton Keynes, MK10 0AG.
Tel 01234 846300 Website www.cxdinternational.com Email via website

Preservation Equipment Ltd., Vincennes Road, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 4HQ. Tel 01379 647400
Website www.preservationequipment.com Email info@preservationequipment.com

Conservation Resources Ltd., Building 345, Upper Heyford, Oxon., OX25 5HA Tel 01869 377940
Website www.conservation-resources.co.uk Email sales@conservation-resources.co.uk

Other useful suppliers

Arrowfile PO Box 637, Wetherby Road, York, YO26 0DQ
Tel 0330 440 5787 Website www.arrowfile.com Email via website

My History offers a wide range of resources aimed at Family Historians but which would be useful for WI Archivists.
Unit 1a Denaby Point, Coalpit Road, Denaby Main, Doncaster, DN12 4LH
Tel 01302 288722 Website www.my-history.co.uk Email sales@my-history.co.uk

Archival Quality Boxes G Ryder & Co, Denbigh Road, Milton Keynes MK1 1DG
Tel 01908 375524 Website www.ryderbox.co.uk Email sales@ryderbox.co.uk

A brief bibliography for those interested in reading about the history of the WI

Jane Robinson – A Force to be reckoned with, a history of the Women's Institute (Virago 2011)

Susan Cohen – The Women's Institute (Shire Publications 2011)

Helen Carey – Bows of Burning Gold (Alfresco Books 2005)

Linda Connell & Anne Stamper – Textile Treasures of the WI (The NNA 2007)

Julie Summers – Jambusters (Simon & Schuster 2013)

Maggie Andrews – The Acceptable Face of Feminism (2nd edition 2015)