ARCHIVES AND ARCHIVING

Archives are the written record of the activities of a WI and should include the Minutes of the Committee Meetings, the records of monthly meetings, Annual Reports and any histories of the WI that may have been compiled by members over the years. Many WIs will also have scrapbooks and photo albums. The formal archives will be held by the current Secretary; the scrapbooks may well be in the care of the member who keeps them up to date. Older material may have been put into the safe keeping of the Surrey History Centre in Woking.

I would suggest that 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.

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.

Textiles – Many WIs have banners and tablecloths that are in regular use, I would recommend that they are wrapped in acid free tissue and within a fabric bag, ideally with a bleach-free fabric, however old cotton pillowcases are very useful for the storage of smaller items. These items often have historical significance besides being examples of varied stitching techniques.

Notes from the Federation Archivist

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 readily available.

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 and 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. Please note that in accordance with the Data Protection requirements any minutes sent out to Committee members should be as an attachment to an email, rather than in the body of the email, and you should ensure that you use BCC when sending out such emails.

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 writing of the Centenary Book in 2018, 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 and minute books, deciding at what frequency to add to the deposit.

The Surrey History Centre
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 the latter option, then I would appreciate having a list of what you deposit for my records.

Scrapbooks and Photo Albums can no longer be accepted.

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

Notes for WI Secretaries
The following list should help you keep what is necessary and prevent you from becoming overwhelmed with the volume of paperwork that some WIs keep. May I urge you when writing Minutes / Records to put the full date at the beginning of each entry, it makes my job so much simpler when it comes to sorting out archives from suspended WIs.

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	Can no longer be accepted
Correspondence with Inland Revenue	Permanently
Correspondence with SFWI or NFWI about fundamental matters that effect the running of your WI	5-10 years as applicable
Surrey WI 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

WI Treasurers should keep Financial Statements & Account Books for 7 years
N.B. Gift Aid Paperwork, both Claim Forms and members details must be kept for 6 years.

Please feel free to contact the archivist with any queries, via the Federation office info@surreyfedwi.org.uk

The Federation Archive

Archive material held in the Federation Office comprises the Federation's own archive material and that of WIs that have recently suspended. I have a wonderfully varied collection including programmes of events held over years, photographs, scrapbooks and books about WI history both National and local. I have copies of the Celebratory Albums made for the retirement of Mrs Auerbach, our first Federation Chairman, and Miss Sutherland, the first Federation Secretary, also the album made for the Federation's 75th Birthday.

The archives of suspended WIs are kept for three years, and then taken to the Surrey History Centre, they are a wonderful source of historical information.

I also have a collection of WI Banners and Tablecloths which are destined for the collection at The National Needlework Archive at Greenham Common in Berkshire.