

That Knit Wit Preston!



Christine Preston is shown with a few of the rolls of knitted lengths.

Broompark Women's Institute (WI) from Durham, England, decided to make the world's longest scarf for their millennium project. They started in 1998 and it's taken three years to complete. Coordinator, Christine Preston, said the aim was to beat the existing world record of just over 20 miles, while at the same time providing knitted pieces to eventually transform into blankets for charity.

With only 20 members in their Branch, they knew they couldn't knit a mile each, so they advertised for help from their WI friends. Because the WI is affiliated with groups around the globe, Broompark received knitting from Canada, the USA, France, Germany, Australia, Sweden and Switzerland. The first length from abroad was received from the Stoney Creek WI, Ontario, Canada. "That's my favourite piece," said Preston, "with Stoney Creek written on it, where the WI began more than 100 years ago."

As the project progressed, Preston learned that the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) had begun a similar undertaking. After talking with them, the WI and the WRVS agreed to join forces. They dedicated one day a week stitching knitted lengths into 100 yard pieces. Near the end,

they transported more than 300 rolls of knitting to Ushaw College, where about a dozen women assembled them into one length or scarf – by hand as outlined in the record-breaking rules.

The gargantuan garment was measured last September and now holds the record as the world's longest knitted scarf. Broompark WI member Olive Loughlin also set a record for the longest scarf knitted by an individual person with a 996 foot section. After the newspapers, radio and television recorded and filmed the big event, the Broompark ladies spent several days dismantling the scarf. The knitted lengths were headed for Low Newton Prison in Durham where female prisoners would be converting them into blankets for various charities.

In a letter of appreciation to the many Women's Institutes involved, Preston writes: "We at Broompark WI and our friends would like to thank you and your friends who knitted or otherwise contributed to the successful completion of the Longest Scarf in the World." She concluded: "Someone, somewhere, will feel the warmth of your friendship this winter."

Extracted from news clippings from Durham, England, and a letter of appreciation written by Christine Preston to WIs in Canada. Submitted by Gladys McQuillum, Strabane WI, Wentworth, and Edna Ward, Carlisle WI, Wentworth.

Report of the FWIO Executive Officer to FWIC

Revitalization Summary

The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) received over 500 responses to their survey on how to revitalize the organization. Several points were apparent in the final analysis:

- that members joined and continue their membership for the betterment of their communities;
- that fellowship and friendships are a priority (One member commented: "If only we could market friendship!");
- that as many members were in favour of raising the fees as were against doing so; and,
- that six topics were most often listed for programming ideas – health, child/family concerns, agriculture, violence/abuse issues, literacy and education.

Recruitment Committee

The FWIC Recruitment Committee will be interviewing a new Women's Institute member and a member of one year standing. The interview, along with a photograph, will be printed in an upcoming *Federated News* and on their website. All provincial presidents have been asked to submit names for this effort. Who knows? You may be the chosen one!

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead

Due to dire financial circumstances, the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead will be closing its doors during the off-season from September 1 to May 15. The Homestead will only be open from May 16 to August 31 this year. The FWIC Hoodless Committee is investigating moving the national office to the Homestead.

Marg Eberle, FWIO Executive Officer to FWIC, asked all members present at the Annual Meeting to brainstorm during lunch in the hopes that discussions might spark an idea to help the situation at the Hoodless. Any and all suggestions are welcome. Please contact the Hoodless Committee.

Federated News

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