**Dear all,**

**Thank you for taking the time to read this document. It begins briefly by outlining my broader PhD project, before moving onto a draft chapter of my PhD entitled *Scrapbooks, histories, and surveys: the history of village scrapbook competitions.* While the growth of village scrapbooking competitions is an important episode in the broader history which I’m trying to chart, I’d also be interested in my broader take-aways from the chapter. Comments on framing, strength of argument, evidence, style etc would be much appreciated.**

**I look forward to discussing the piece with you shortly in New York.**

**Best**

**Cherish**

**Overview of project**

My PhD is about the history of scrapbooks, archiving, and the self in Britain from c.1900-1980. Scrapbooks are untamed, eclectic sources, which fuse a range of items into the pages of a book. Women, men, and children from an array of backgrounds, ages, and occupations made scrapbooks during the twentieth century. Scrapbookers used newspaper clippings, photographs, leaflets, pressed flowers, and material objects to document concurrently the unusual and mundane aspects of life. Scrapbook-making was simultaneously a popular pastime, a way to curate and record legacy, and an archive amassed by appropriating an array of cultural resources into a book. Offering the first history of scrapbooking in Britain, my project seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Who scrapbooked, why did they scrapbook, and on what topics during the twentieth century?
2. How did scrapbook practices change over the course of the twentieth century?
3. What do scrapbooks tell us about everyday, emotional histories of archiving in Britain?
4. How do scrapbooks co-exist with other forms of mass media over the course of the twentieth century?

My history is located against the burgeoning scholarship of the everyday, emotional, intimate histories of Britain. It synthesises several literatures on archives, the self, material culture, life writing, and the emotions to see key episodes in British life through the eyes of a variety of historical actors, many of whom have not left any other archival trace. Moving beyond the recuperative work of proving the value of scrapbooks, this project interrogates the persistent impulses of historical actors to collect, archive, and record their lives, and explores how these practices changed over the course of the twentieth century. Through a series of case-studies, I endeavour to show how different communities engaged in scrapbooking and consider how the practice was influenced by the gender, class, and age. I argue that scrapbooks were an accessible form of archiving available to large swathes of the British population, which shaped, and were products of, how Britons understood their lives. The chronology of my project broadly starts where other historians have stopped, the end of the Victorian period and currently continues to the 1980s, which is based on the survival of sources related to my core themes.

Over the course of the twentieth century, scrapbooks were put to more divergent uses, compared to those made in the Victorian period, both in their paper form and their aural and visual adaptation into other types of mass media. This thesis will delve into the varied ways in which scrapbooks were used through a series of case-studies centred around the themes of activism, local history, war, eroticism, and the Royal Family. It will also analyse how scrapbooks functioned as both a product and tool of mass culture. Taken together, these chapters construct the first historical account of scrapbooking in Britain and provide more democratic and inclusive histories of community and personal archiving.

This project will make several interventions in scholarship on scrapbooks and the social history of Britain. Inspired by Joe Moran and Erika Hanna’s work on the macro and micro everyday histories of a single genre of source, I will offer the first twentieth century history of scrapbooks in Britain. This will be primarily concerned with who scrapbooked, why they scrapbooked, what materials they used, and on what topics. Second, this project seeks to illuminate scrapbooking as a collaborative archiving practice, extending scrapbook scholarship which largely focuses on single-author volumes to offer a better understanding of how different communities and groups operated and sought to mark their existence. Third, I plan to re-orientate scrapbook literature which predominantly understands scrapbooking as a female, domestic, familial activity to explore male scrapbooking. Though scrapbook making has traditionally been associated with women, men from a range of backgrounds similarly spent hours of their time collecting material to insert into their scrapbooks. Bringing gender more powerfully into the existing literature on scrapbook scholarship will help to provide a more democratic, inclusive history of the practice.

Using scrapbooks dedicated to suffrage activism and community histories (the chapter which follows), the first section of my project considers how and why scrapbooks were used as a form of community archive, alongside the practical and affective roles they fulfilled for different groups. Shifting the focus to that of personal archiving, the second section examines what scrapbooks on war and erotica reveal about histories of the self. The final section unpacks the scrapbook’s changing umbilical relationship with mass culture.

**Scrapbooks, histories, and surveys: the history of village scrapbook competitions**

**Cherish Watton**

**Introduction**

In 2009, June Field, ex-president of Smarden Women’s Institute (WI) was interviewed about her memories of being a member, after she had moved with her husband to this East Kent village in 1955. Soon after being asked to ‘tell us something about it’, Field began to recount her WI’s history of scrapbooking activities:

‘They decided in, I think it was in ’69 [sic], which was the golden anniversary, to do a nation-wide competition of the village of that time in that particular year. They didn’t want past histories, they didn’t want war stories of anything like that, they simply wanted that village for that year and it was done throughout the country, so you got almost a Domesday Book, really, of what was going on. Again, we had a wonderful team of people. They all went round with their cameras and their notebooks and covered every aspect, every wedding, every funeral; everything that happened was put on in that one year.’[[1]](#footnote-1)

Field was one of over 150,000 rural women belonging to the National Federation of Women’s Institutes (NFWI) who had dedicated some of their time in 1965 and 1966 to creating a scrapbook on life in their village. Many had carefully cut around articles and photographs published in local and national newspapers relevant to village life. While some women busily wrote letters to local organisations and councils, others interviewed fellow residents about their occupations and how they spent their leisure time.[[2]](#footnote-2) They amassed long lists of electors, farmers, schoolchildren, parish councillors, as well as publications read in the village. They scoured the pages of glossy magazines for photographs to represent the latest fashions and home furnishings, inserting these next to fabric samples to recreate the touch and feel of domestic interiors. They captioned photographs, inserted invoices, created elaborate graphs and diagrams, to convey information such as living costs, consumer durable and car ownership. They located maps of their village, or drew their own, carefully outlining the boundaries of where their village ended and the next started. Women (and their families) recorded rainfall, money raised from the village’s charitable activities, the ages and heights of schoolchildren, as well as the types of work carried out by their fellow residents. With their words they shared vivid anecdotes of local personalities; with their scissors they offered unusual and eclectic juxtapositions of ephemeral material to convey their thoughts over changes to rural life. WI members photographed, painted, cross-stitched, and embroidered the front covers of these collaborative volumes.[[3]](#footnote-3) Some had even taken classes in bookbinding, so they would have the skills to consolidate the products of their research endeavours into a book.[[4]](#footnote-4) By mid-1966, thousands of women had surveyed, snipped, sorted, and secured a wide variety of media into a scrapbook, ready to submit to the NFWI’s Jubilee Scrapbook competition.

This chapter explores the history of this competition and situates it against a longer history of village scrapbooking, with a village scrapbook being defined as a homemade, bound volume comprising a range of media, taking as its focus the geographical unit of the village.[[5]](#footnote-5) I argue that from 1930 to 1965, village scrapbooking shifted from an individual form of clerical record keeping, to a collective, self-reflective social survey, borne out of the new value attached to ‘ordinary’ experience in the post-war period.[[6]](#footnote-6) The NFWI, the largest woman’s organisation in the country, transformed the scrapbook into a social survey and political tool, which foregrounded rural issues of pertinence to women. By conceptualising village scrapbooking as form of anthropological research, I argue that historians have much to gain from looking beyond the work of Mass Observation (MO) and well-known social science researchers to associational-driven social surveying activities. As well as making interventions into the literature of post-war social science, this chapter also treads new ground in the scrapbooking scholarship in modern Britain, by tracing a new type of scrapbooking carried out by a range of hitherto obscured groups.

This chapter uses the history of village scrapbook competitions to chart a type of scrapbooking that expanded from an individual to a communal practice. Most, if not all of the historiography on scrapbooking within and beyond Britain focuses on scrapbooks compiled by an individual, or a family, as opposed to associations and community groups who also turned to scrapbooks as part of, or to document, their activities.[[7]](#footnote-7)While Eloise Moss usefully identifies community scrapbooks as fulfilling a ‘local, knowledge-sharing function’, few historians have explored this type of scrapbooking, including village scrapbooking, in any great depth.[[8]](#footnote-8) This bias towards individual scrapbooking practices is indicative of the influence of life writing scholarship, which focuses on the strategies writers employ to document individual lives, privileging textual forms of life writing, such as autobiographies, memoirs, and diaries over more visual sources.[[9]](#footnote-9) This focus on solo scrapbookers also reflects the importance given to the growing conceptualisation of the self and the value ascribed to ‘individual rights, identities and perspectives’ in post-war Britain.[[10]](#footnote-10) Yet, in light of recent work by Jon Lawrence showing the co-existence of individualism and community life in post-war Britain, the communal adoption of scrapbooking should not come as a surprise.[[11]](#footnote-11) By the time that the WI launched its national competition, hundreds of its members had been involved in making scrapbooks, whether as entries for earlier competitions, as institutional records, or as a philanthropic endeavour. By situating the WI’s 1965 national competition into a longer history of village scrapbooking, I explore how and why this form of scrapbooking shifted both from an individual to a communal practice, as well as from a historical record to social survey. As Susan Tucker et al note, ‘scrapbooks are one of the most enduring yet simultaneously changing cultural forms of the last two centuries’, yet very little is known about twentieth century developments in Britain.[[12]](#footnote-12) This chapter rectifies this omission by tracing the evolution of a specific genre of scrapbooking, extending our histories of the practice into the twentieth century, and offering the first account of community scrapbooking practices.[[13]](#footnote-13)

I also pay close attention to women’s reflections on their experiences of making the scrapbook as this unlocks a vital part of the history of scrapbooking, which scholars rarely encounter. Often scrapbooks might survive alone, without any other archival material about their creator, leaving many questions unanswered about the motives and dynamics of the scrapbooking-making process. Even if a scrapbook contains an acknowledgement, dedication in the frontispiece, or a series of captions which help to describe the relationship of the scrapbooker to their material, the physical act of making the scrapbook is shrouded in silence.[[14]](#footnote-14) Some scholars such as Ellen Garvey, suggest that anonymous scrapbooks should not be subjected to analysis without information on its provenance.[[15]](#footnote-15) By extension then, with a wealth of material surviving on village scrapbooking competitions, both within and beyond the scrapbooks themselves, this form of scrapbooking demands historical attention. In tracing the origins of village scrapbooking from male clerical to WI circles, this chapter also valuably inserts men into our histories of scrapbook-making in Britain, a group who have received little attention from scrapbook scholars, owing to the gendered assumptions about scrapbooking as a leisured activity reserved for elite women.[[16]](#footnote-16)

This chapter does more though than speak to a historiography of scrapbooks. It makes important contributions to wider literatures which trace the democratisation of social knowledge. Village scrapbooking responded, and fed into, the wider democratisation of life writing during the interwar period, as compilers selected and arranged a wealth of textual and visual material into their homemade records. Village scrapbooks were just as much a part of the life writing boom of the interwar period, as the burst in publications of autobiographies, biographies, and memoirs.[[17]](#footnote-17) Yet, scrapbooks have been side-lined in these historiographical conversations, rarely afforded the same respect as published volumes, owing to their eclectic incorporation of material, as well as their unfortunate name, which denigrates the value of the material inserted in its pages.[[18]](#footnote-18) Village scrapbooks were another crucial site, alongside folk museums and popular social history books, where rural communities contemplated the past, present, and future lives of their villages in thoughtful and creative ways. Understanding village scrapbooking as a form of social survey prompts scholars to consider alternative sites for the creation of social knowledge, which move beyond textual material into the realms of the visual. Scholars therefore have much to learn from taking seriously ‘ordinary people’s meaning-generating activities’, as they allow us to explore how different communities understood and made sense of the worlds in which they lived. Often, feelings and reflections incorporated into village scrapbooks are some of the only surviving archival material for some historical actors, who owing to their gender, and rural location, have tended to remain on the periphery of our historical studies. By focusing on this rural story of village scrapbooking, this chapter re-orientates the current metrocentric bias on changes to place in the twentieth century, by moving rural Britain from the margins of modern British historiography, unashamedly to the centre.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Despite the survival of a rich archival base, historians have rarely looked at village scrapbooks in any great depth, and when they have, they have failed to situate the largest national village scrapbooking competition within a longer chronological context. Historians have only referred to the scrapbooks for illustrative purposes in either larger histories on topics as wide ranging as rural life, food, and germs, or in local histories such as the Victoria County History series.[[20]](#footnote-20) Even histories of the WI give little more than a passing mention to the competition, with Jane Robinson dedicating the most space (a paragraph) to the competition when exploring how the WI marked its Jubilee.[[21]](#footnote-21) Rosemary Shirley is alone in considering the 1965 competition in detail and using a handful of submissions to consider rural women’s attitudes on electrification.[[22]](#footnote-22) This chapter builds on this nascent scholarship by subjecting 30 scrapbooks to analysis, bringing them into conversation with other surviving archival material, and crucially contextualising the WI’s competition against earlier scrapbooking initiatives.The chapter takes as its source base several scrapbooks deposited in county record offices in Essex, Bedfordshire, and Northamptonshire, as the NFWI noted that that the entries from these counties were particularly strong and are therefore helpful for looking at what best scrapbooking practice looked like.[[23]](#footnote-23) These volumes are supplemented with an analysis of scrapbooks deposited in individual WI or personal collections, alongside scrapbooks which WIs and local history societies have shared online from across England and Wales, in order to gain a more even coverage in terms of geographical area and scrapbook quality. The WI’s publication *Home and Country*, NFWI administrative material, local publications, and oral histories are also invaluable sources for illuminating the dynamics of these competitions. Such competitions also elicited interest from local and national newspapers, whose articles, alongside accompanying publications help to trace the origins of village scrapbooking initiatives. This chapter begins by tracing the evolution of the village scrapbook from an activity pioneered by clerical elites to one carried out by rural women. I then explore the self-reflexivity of this process and what this reveals about the nature of the scrapbook production and the emotional dynamics of ‘writing with scissors’.[[24]](#footnote-24) Finally, I explore how women politicised these social surveys, as they vocalised their discontent over the changes they had witnessed in their villages.

**The origin of the village scrapbook competition**

The idea of the ‘village scrapbook’ emerged as a top-down form of record-keeping, carried out by Anglican priests to record interwar life in rural parishes. In the 1935 publication *The Care of Churches,* cleric Neil Truman invited clerics to use ‘a large Press-cuttings book’ to house:

‘all newspaper cuttings about the church and any special services (not sermons or ordinary services), photos, prints, engravings. Snapshots of the building should be collected and also placed in the book and dated. Also those of rectors, parish clerks, local celebrities, village observances […] in short, anything and everything which tells the story of the church and the life of the inhabitants.’[[25]](#footnote-25)

The scrapbook medium was an apt choice for a cleric keen to archive a range of different types of media on his parish’s life. He understood that these various institutional and cultural records of the church, and its influence on the parish, would be of critical interest to antiquarians and historians of the future, who would benefit from the preservation of this information. Truman was cognisant to labour involved in such an exercise and recognised that other clerics might prefer to create more detailed records in pre-existing registers or diaries.[[26]](#footnote-26) The parish scrapbook then was an extension of pre-existing clerical record-keeping practices, immortalising the role of the Anglican church in the parish through the eyes of cleric. This record privileged priests over parishioners, with individual worshippers only making an appearance if they occupied positions within the church or where exceptional in some way, such as a ‘village celebrity’.[[27]](#footnote-27) Dr Bernard Heywood, Bishop of Ely from 1934 to 1941, praised Truman’s idea on the front page of *The Ely Diocesan Gazette* in 1936, noting how several regions had already started compiling their own parish scrapbooks, suggesting the existence of these types of record-keeping practices before the publication of Truman’s book.[[28]](#footnote-28) The cost of keeping such a record would be small, but highly useful and a ‘labour of love’ for those interested in the Church – an early, if only fleeting, recognition of the emotional dimension of compiling such records.[[29]](#footnote-29) The village scrapbook, as understood by both Heywood and Truman recorded parish life from the cleric’s perspective.

It was not long before antiquarians and local historians seized upon the archival qualities of village scrapbooks and broadened the remit of what the scrapbooker should record. Gordon Ward, antiquarian and long-standing member of Kent Archaeological Society, praised the role of the village scrapbook in not just recording the lives of the church-going parishioners, but village life as a whole – disconnecting the activity from its ecclesiastical origins. Ward, like many scrapbookers before and after him, specifically turned to the genre of the scrapbook, because of the flexibility the blank page offered him when bringing together a range of information on a village, such as newspapers, photographs, advertisements, and headlines into a single volume.[[30]](#footnote-30) He advised readers of *Kent County Journal* to defer to the authority of print culture by only inserting printed items into their scrapbooks which related to the life of the village. He also suggested that the exercise would be more interesting if a potential scrapbooker dedicated their volume to a village besides their own, as it would make the research process more satisfying and genuinely exploratory. In the same year, residents of Smarden in Kent attracted the attention of the *Daily Mirror* in 1936*,* which satirised the adaptation of the ‘album habit […] by a larger social unit than the family’, symptomatic of the wider fascination with the ‘ordinary’ and ‘everyday’ in interwar Britain (Figure 1).[[31]](#footnote-31) While the journalist praised the village’s scrapbooking endeavours, they felt that villagers had adopted the activity too late; rural communities were now devoid of ‘a wealth of quaint rural functions and observances’, leaving nothing left of value to record.[[32]](#footnote-32) Even if this time had passed in Smarden, the journalist shared sentiments voiced by antiquarians such as Ward, about the role the village scrapbook could play in accounts records of village life.

The wider preservationist and democratic impulses underpinning village scrapbooking activities, were a product of the broader growth of rural associational culture.[[33]](#footnote-33) In the interwar period, rural communities experienced somewhat of a revival in the emergence of new village societies and rural leisure.[[34]](#footnote-34) Some of these associations, such as the Rural Community Council, saw local history and its accompanying heritage activities, as part of its mission to turn countryside residents into citizens and foster a sense of parish pride.[[35]](#footnote-35) In the same vein, the scrapbooking activities of the WI should not surprise us as a branch-based organisation designed to bring together working and middle-class rural women, ‘aligned with traditionally female occupations of crafting, and informal custodianship of everyday histories’.[[36]](#footnote-36) Sometimes making a scrapbook, such as on the Royal Family, was part of a weekly competition amongst WI members.[[37]](#footnote-37) More frequently, WIs channelled their energies into making volumes to entertain young and elderly patients staying in hospital, through providing a book brimming with colourful scraps and Christmas cards.[[38]](#footnote-38) WI scrapbooks, made on their own activities, for others, and for competitions, joined a wealth of scrapbooks made by members of other associations such as the Co-operative Women’s Guild, the Royal Voluntary Association, and the Maccabi Association of which to name a few.[[39]](#footnote-39) The Girls Friendly Society (GFS), launched its seventh scrapbook competition in 1937 under the auspices of its Empire Education Scheme, which encouraged girls’ loyalty and patriotism towards the empire.[[40]](#footnote-40) Every year from 1955 through to 1957, the Royal Voluntary Society (RVS) launched a competition to gather scrapbooks to give to hospitalised children, receiving entries from scrapbookers aged between 8 and 92 years of age.[[41]](#footnote-41) WIs, like many other organisations, embraced the flexibility offered by scrapbooks, whether as a form of light-hearted competitive entertainment or part of a wider philanthropic endeavour. Though these scrapbooks were not focused on the village, the pervasiveness of associational scrapbooking practices and competitions shows how several organisations used the activity to encourage educational and philanthropic engagement from its members.

Against this broader landscape of scrapbook competitions, the late-1930s and 1940s witnessed a shift in the production of village scrapbooks, as WIs and other heritage associations, turned what had previously been a solo scrapbooking initiative into a communal one for recording the history of the village. On the eve of the Second World War, the *Yarmouth Independent* reported on the annual meeting of Norfolk Record Society (NRS), where members discussed the need to not just focus its activities on assimilating older historical records, but on creating and preserving records for the future. The meeting spotlighted the efforts of antiquarian Basil Couzens-Hardy, who had worked with WIs in Norfolk to produce their own village histories.[[42]](#footnote-42) Rather than those outside of the village making a scrapbook as Ward had initially advised, it was now left to WI women to make a volume dedicated to their own village. Village scrapbooking increasingly became an embodiment of the ‘history of everyday life’, a visual and material manifestation of the new value ascribed to ‘the affective, local, and feminized way of imagining and representing “uneventful” lives’.[[43]](#footnote-43) Village scrapbooking was no longer the preserve of clerics and antiquarians, but open to anyone who had an interest in recording heritage, favouring those who had the time and money to put towards the endeavour.[[44]](#footnote-44) The urgency to preserve the records of the countryside was also fed by, and into developments in the realm of oral history, where figures such as George Ewart Evans and Ronald Blythe used oral testimony to account for changes in the nature of rural society before there was no one left to remember them.[[45]](#footnote-45) This same impulse to record rural life ahead of irrevocable change also underpinned village scrapbooking activities, which were now accessible to a larger audience.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, several county WI federations seized upon the competitive element of scrapbook-making. It is difficult to trace a neat trajectory between different village scrapbooking initiatives in WI cultures, as some appear to have emerged organically as a result of local activities. For example one, if not, the earliest WI village scrapbook competition took place in West Sussex in 1947, inspired by Clapham and Patching WI who had compiled a history of their village for their link WI in America in 1945.[[46]](#footnote-46) Having learnt about their activities, West Sussex WI Federation subsequently launched a village scrapbook competition, which elicited entries from half of the county’s WIs, whose submissions included watercolours, quotes from the Doomsday book, maps, etchings, and poems.[[47]](#footnote-47) Similar competitions took place in Surrey (1950), West Sussex (1952), Cheshire (1951-52), and East Sussex (1953).[[48]](#footnote-48) WI members responded with such eagerness to these competitions that J Swanzy, Chairman of the NFWI’s General Education Sub-Committee, reported on these activities in *Home and Country* in 1952 where she presented the activity as having a broad appeal to members, whether they enjoyed the research or craft aspect of the activity.[[49]](#footnote-49) Women did not need to defer solely to printed, authoritative sources, but could draw on their own experience and creativity when documenting rural life – showing an expansion of the material that was now deemed worthwhile to save in the scrapbook. This history-focused village scrapbook competition also attracted support from local history and record societies, who ran competitions in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, and Bedfordshire in 1952, 1954, and 1955 respectively.[[50]](#footnote-50) They went on to receive entries from WIs, schools, individuals, and other village associations, broadening still further who could compile these volumes.[[51]](#footnote-51) These scrapbook makers, like interwar publishers, participated in the dissemination of popular social history, as they took the recording of the history of their villages into their own hands.[[52]](#footnote-52) These history-focused village scrapbooks can be understood as an interactive site where the ‘history of everyday life’ was democratised, as a largely (though not exclusively) female audience created local histories and identities by drawing on visual and material culture.[[53]](#footnote-53)

In the space of just thirty years village scrapbooking had evolved from an elite, clerical, male practice to an associational-led activity which was in theory accessible to anyone who wished to find out more about the historical and present-day life of the village – even if in reality it was geared towards those who had the time, money, and inclination to dedicate towards heritage-making activities. Scrapbookers no longer needed to rely solely on the authority of printed matter, but could assimilate any material into its pages, including diary entries, potted autobiographies, photographs, or illustrations. Capitalising on the currents of earlier competitions, local history societies and voluntary associations alike, embraced the flexibility of the scrapbook medium to encourage its members to create a record of their village. Village scrapbooks were another site where ‘the history of everyday life’ was articulated, functioning in a similar manner to museums as ‘vehicles of popular social history’.[[54]](#footnote-54) These village scrapbook competitions were a product of wider anxieties over the pace of change in the countryside, as well as a recognition that associations and its members could shape the historical record. It was not long before village scrapbooking shifted more confidently from its origins as a volume of village history to a communally produced social survey.

**The WI’s 1965 Golden Jubilee Scrapbook Competition**

In June 1963, the WI’s General Education Sub-Committee wanted to launch an initiative, in honour of the organisation’s Jubilee, to help stimulate ‘interest in the country’ through the ‘means of a competition at Institute level in the form of a Village Book (as opposed to a village history)’.[[55]](#footnote-55) The exact form of the book was undecided, but considering the diversity of media they wanted women to capture (including drawings, writing, and photographs), it is no wonder that by November, the committee had settled on the scrapbook as the format for the entries.[[56]](#footnote-56) Over the course of 1963 and 1964, various committees turned their competition idea into a reality, constantly emphasising how the competition, ‘Our Village Today – Jubilee Scrap Book, 1965’, would focus on documenting the present.[[57]](#footnote-57) At the end of April 1964, Gabrielle Pike, Chairman of the WI, sent a letter to every WI President in England and Wales launching the competition:

‘…the Women’s Institutes will be celebrating their Golden Jubilee in 1965, and we feel that this will be an appropriate occasion for as many as possible of the Institutes to make a permanent record of their village **as it is in that year** […] at least six members should contribute to the book, with drawings, plans, photographs, lettering, research, written descriptions, printed matter and other material; and do make the book as appealing to the eye as possible. […] what we want is *not* a history, but a picture of your village and its life in 1965, which you can hand down to future generations.’[[58]](#footnote-58)

While Pike acknowledged earlier village history competitions and initiatives, she emphasised how this competition was different in its focus on recording the village today: ‘the place, the people, what they do, and the future’.[[59]](#footnote-59) The committee discussed how they planned to use the information from the scrapbooks strategically in their county and national campaigning work.[[60]](#footnote-60) Connecting the scrapbooking to a wider social purpose, the competition shared its antecedents with the interwar regional survey movement, which focused on recording information to better understand a local area, with the dual purpose of facilitating more efficient planning and fostering good citizenship amongst its compilers.[[61]](#footnote-61) The 1965 competition mirrored the regional survey’s preoccupation with connecting ‘geography (place), economics (work), and anthropology (folk)’, as illustrated in the competition brief where women were encouraged to reflect on both continuity and change.[[62]](#footnote-62) The WI’s scrapbook competition drew on elements from the interwar regional survey movement and fused them with social research, going as far as to describe these community creations as ‘social surveys’ in their press release for the competition.[[63]](#footnote-63) The launch of this competition can be seen as another venue in post-war Britain which sought to ‘restore, or more accurately re-make, “ordinary life”’, as women literally turned to ephemeral material from their rural worlds to represent elements of their lives.[[64]](#footnote-64) Women’s entries to the competition were not compiled in haste, but the product of days of work selecting, cutting, pasting, crafting, and editing over the course of 1965 and 1966. The creation of a scrapbook proved a compelling format for encouraging women’s participation in social surveying activities. The focus of the competition clearly awakened much interest in WI members as over 150,000 WI women worked in some capacity on one of 2,500 scrapbooks submitted to the competition.[[65]](#footnote-65)

Women across England and Wales collected and presented a range of information on their villages. In Pembury (Figure 3), members devised their own questionnaire, whose 79 responses they presented as a series of typescript numbers, sorted into categories such as ‘houses’, ‘equipment’, ‘running our homes’, ‘shopping’, ‘house maintenance’, ‘health’, ‘religion’, and ‘holidays’.[[66]](#footnote-66) This page presented an assortment of information on the quotidian life of the village, from levels of consumer durable and car ownership, to the extent of domestic help, to how often villagers cooked bread or cakes at home, or whether they paid for support for decorating or did it themselves.[[67]](#footnote-67) In Ashton in Northamptonshire, one compiler formulated a list of all 354 families in the village, amassing information on a villager’s marital status, age, as well as the any children, educational provision, and occupation.[[68]](#footnote-68) While Pembury and Ashton scrapbook compilers simply reproduced their statistics in a table, other WIs were more imaginative in their presentation. Bishopstone and Hinton Parva WI created what looks to twenty-first century eyes like a hand-drawn infographic, supplementing a lot of the information collected by Pembury with additional numbers on the occupational breakdown of villagers and more specific information, such as levels of pet ownership (Figure 4).[[69]](#footnote-69) In Collingtree (Figure 2), women created a series of graphs to categorise the different types of work carried out by men and women in the village, distilling the results into those who lived on the new Grange estate, who largely occupied roles as business executives or directors of firms, compared to those who lived in the older part of the village and worked as farm, factory, or building labourers.[[70]](#footnote-70) Some WIs went step further in their compilation of records and began to analyse the results for their readers.

This survey aspect of the competition shared its lineages with earlier social surveying activities taking place within the WI and other women’s organisations. Invitations for women to scrapbook on topics such as new house-building initiatives, transport, drainage, and schools, echoed many of the areas covered in *Your Village: A Survey by the N.F.W.I,* published in 1950 to highlight pertinent rural issues.[[71]](#footnote-71) Since the 1920s, the organisation had used surveys to gather the opinion of its members and to harness this information to bring about change.[[72]](#footnote-72) These survey activities also included a heritage dimension, as shown by the publication *How to Compile a History and Present Day Record of Village Life* specifically aimed at WIs, and the launch of several post-war essay competitions*.*[[73]](#footnote-73)The 1965 scrapbook competition continued on this trajectory, albeit in a more creative and flexible form, introducing a competitive and creative element to this surveying movement, which allowed women to decide on their own methods of data collection and presentation. The scrapbook also gave individual women the flexibility to work on certain pages and sections, reflecting their specific interests and skills. As the opening of this chapter showed, women responded with great creativity, presenting qualitative and quantitative data using a range of visual and textual strategies (Figure 2). The freedom afforded by the scrapbook genre embodied a wider subjective shift away from the WI’s earlier surveying activities, as it bestowed more power on individual WI branches.[[74]](#footnote-74) The expansion of the WI’s surveying scrapbooking activities took place concurrently as professional women’s organisations embraced more conventional surveys to advance the provision of women’s training and employment.[[75]](#footnote-75) This proliferation of the social surveys by women’s organisations speaks to wider developments in the professionalisation of social science, as researchers and organisations turned to social surveys to probe new ways of understanding communities and social change in post-war Britain.[[76]](#footnote-76)The WI’s scrapbook competition helped to democratise these surveying sentiments and incorporate them into everyday life.[[77]](#footnote-77)

These village scrapbooking activities can be seen as a rural, grassroots version of Mass Observation’s (MO) aim to create an ‘anthology of ourselves’. The WI’s brief for the competition was a less pointed example of MO’s famous directives; the scrapbook a more creative and visual response compared an essay or letter. WI scrapbookers shared the sentiments of many Mass Observers as they saw their role as rebalancing the historical record to their favour.[[78]](#footnote-78) Eight Ash Green WI in Essex noted in their submission how their scrapbook was ‘an attempt to show the reader how this community lived and entertained itself’, while Renold wanted ‘their faithful account […] to give ‘something of the atmosphere of the place’.[[79]](#footnote-79) Women presented themselves as experts of rural life, whether they had been long-term residents or had recently moved to the village, and wanted to use their expertise to inform future readers about their village – emblematic of the new importance attached to ‘ordinariness’ in post-war life.[[80]](#footnote-80) The NFWI validated women’s subjective experiences and anticipated they would be of interest to future historians and sociologists.[[81]](#footnote-81) Mirroring the reluctance of sociologists to appreciate the MO’s cutting edge research activities, historians have generally been preoccupied with the work of MO and well-known social researchers such as Michael Young, Peter Willmott and Pearl Jephcott (amongst many others), whose lives and field work have been the subject of historical revision.[[82]](#footnote-82) In doing so, the grassroots version of many of these social survey activities have been overlooked, despite being an important part of the story of the wider ‘routinization of social research…and its mundane embedding into every day life’.[[83]](#footnote-83) Indeed, as this competition shows, this process was far from dull and should be subjected to scrutiny. Whereas Mass Observers generally offered their responses in textual form, the WI’s competition gave more freedom to women in how they decided to respond to the brief, marking one of the first times that the social survey moved away from its purely textual origins, to incorporate creative collages, graphs, photographs, drawings, and fabrics. Just as MO began to re-align itself in the arena of market research and away from its original focus on a ‘science of ourselves’, the NFWI’s competition picked up where MO had left off – democratising and expanding anthropological techniques through the launch of its competition.[[84]](#footnote-84)

Many of WI compilers shared the same self-reflexive tendencies of the Mass Observers, as they incorporated reflections on the compilation process into their books.[[85]](#footnote-85) The inclusion of these comments foreshadows later-twentieth century developments in scrapbooking, which gave as much emphasis to the making of the scrapbook as the finished volume.[[86]](#footnote-86) These 1965 scrapbooks however show that the dual focus on both process *and* finished volume was not confined to this later period, but took place much earlier.[[87]](#footnote-87) The gleeful title of a page in West Chiltington’s book, ‘We Made This Book’ (Figure 5), offered names for each of the compilers, gave their ages, occupations, as well their roles in both the WI and in the scrapbook-making process.[[88]](#footnote-88) Women’s inclusion of such information shows that scrapbookers did not always ‘remain free, elusive, and hidden’, as Susan Tucker et al assert, but could be transparent about their role in the compilation process.[[89]](#footnote-89) Phyllis Porter, the Chairman of the dedicated ‘Scrap-book Committee’ informed readers that she made and bound the book, while other members took photographs, interviewed fellow villages, penned sections on village history, and weaved the material for the front cover. Judges perceptively foreshadowed and rewarded the importance of these reflections, noting how it had ‘achieved a peak of originality by including photos and biographies of compilers. Posterity will thank them for that’.[[90]](#footnote-90) One of the winners of the overall competition Radwinter WI, included a photograph of the Old Vicarage where they met for their scrapbook meetings.[[91]](#footnote-91) Unusually, they also included a small, signed photograph of each woman at the end of each page that they had researched, ensuring that readers did not overlook the contributions of individual members (Figure 6). Similarly in Pembury, WI members added nine head profile silhouettes to a page with information on the age of the compilers, how long they had lived in the village, their families, and a brief snippet of their interests (Figure 7).[[92]](#footnote-92) This focus on illuminating the women and processes behind the community volumes also reflected in the press coverage relating to the competition. In February 1966, the NFWI’s Press and Public Relations Officer Molly Millard, encouraged county press officers to get in touch with the local press with examples of the ‘little human stories’, such as a WI member’s husband recording rainfall levels in aid of the competition.[[93]](#footnote-93) It was these ‘little human stories’ which reporters for *Home and Country* emphasised when they reported on an exhibition of some of the best scrapbooks at the Celyon Tea Centre in London from 23 to 27 May 1966. At the scrapbook exhibition, WI members were most interested in discussing the ‘“inside” work’ at the heart of the compilation process, or what Cait McKinney has recently conceptualised as ‘information activism’, the ‘range of materials and processes constituting the collective, often unspectacular labor that sustains social movements’.[[94]](#footnote-94) Women were eager to share their experiences forming scrapbooking committees, enlisting the help of family and community members – and of 3 a.m. bedtimes before submission.[[95]](#footnote-95) Women expected future readers to be as interested in the creative process, as much as the finished product. While women have historically exhibited a tendency to marginalise their own autonomy within life writing sources, the inclusion of short biographies of the scrapbook compilers, as well as this wider press coverage, reveals the importance they ascribed to leaving their own personal stamp on their communal record.[[96]](#footnote-96)

Women’s subjective reflections on scrapbooking should not come as a surprise in light of changes in the post-war period which witnessed the birth of the ‘desiring, relating, actualizing self’.[[97]](#footnote-97) Nikolas Rose highlights how family albums were one of the many self-actualizing practices where individuals assembled their sense of self.[[98]](#footnote-98) More specifically in relation to scrapbooks, Jessica Helfand argues that these volumes were ‘ultimate laboratories for postmodern experiments in self-conceptualization’.[[99]](#footnote-99) Both Helfand and Rose understand these self-making practices purely in an individual sense, overlooking how the scrapbook as a genre could encompass both individual and collective notions of selfhood. Through potted biographies, women injected and celebrated their own sense of self in these community creations, visually representing the co-existence of community and individualism within post-war Britain.[[100]](#footnote-100) While James Hinton has understood the self-reflexivity of Mass Observers as evidence of an ‘increasingly individualistic culture […] displacing older sources of selfhood embedded in kindship, neighbourhood, class, and other forms of collective identity’, I argue that the scrapbooks made for this 1965 competition show the continued vitality of collective identities to post-war conceptions of self-hood.[[101]](#footnote-101) As Jon Lawrence has convincingly shown, ‘self and society became mutually interdependent rather than antagonistic’ in post-war Britain.[[102]](#footnote-102) Connecting Lawrence’s findings with histories of selfhood, these scrapbooks should encourage historians of modern Britain to re-work understandings of post-war selfhood to more fully take account of collective identities.[[103]](#footnote-103)

The WI’s 1965 competition had transformed the village scrapbook more confidently form a work of history into a social survey. The WI created their own version of the social survey, as they made the countryside, and women’s observations of this, the subject of study. Though directed by a brief, women were given free reign over how they would present life in their village, whether through pictures, text, or fabric, making it one of the first visual social surveys of the post-war period. The competition expanded many of the social surveying activities taking place more broadly in post-war society, with the format of the scrapbook encouraging women to set the parameters of how they wanted to record their village. They made these volumes with a future reader in mind and were unusually reflective on the scrapbook creation process and their own individual roles. As this next section shows, women turned these social surveys into political tools as they voiced their discontent over the compilation process, as well as some of the changes they had witnessed to rural life.

**Pages of protest**

Though there might be a temptation to take the glowing press coverage of the WI’s competition at face value, women’s comments in the scrapbooks themselves show that the compilation process was not always consensual.As Jane Hamlett reminds us in the familial context, album-making was a form of ‘emotional work’, carried out by mothers on behalf of their families.[[104]](#footnote-104) As earlier comments made by the Bishop of Ely about village scrapbooking being a ‘labour of love’ to WI women’s reflections on the competition show, the emotional labour underpinning album production was not the sole preserve of family life.[[105]](#footnote-105) The acknowledgements of many of the 1965 scrapbooks gave an optimistic view of the creation process, thanking sometimes all villagers for their unstinting support, even if in reality it would have been unlikely that every villager became involved.[[106]](#footnote-106) There is not one single community, but ‘many overlapped “lived communities”’, several of which are not represented in the pages of these community scrapbooks, or in the positive public narratives of the competition.[[107]](#footnote-107) Snippets dispersed in the scrapbooks and in later oral history interviews, help move beyond the rose-tinted view of the compilation process. Some women noted their initial trepidations at contributing to the communal scrapbook or whether they would be able to gather enough material when they had few village institutions.[[108]](#footnote-108) Others were more vocal about some of the conflict ensuing from the creation of the scrapbook. In an interview with Dianne Redfern, a compiler of Radwinter WI’s scrapbook in 2021, she remembered how conversation was ‘frank and free’ when they met in the village’s Old Vicarage, implying that there was some level of disagreement between members.[[109]](#footnote-109) Redfern told me multiple times how she had to remind one member, who had become too distracted with researching the village’s history, that they were recording the village as it was in 1965, not in the past – a repetition again of the NFWI’s core focus of the competition.[[110]](#footnote-110) Though some conflict might have been inevitable, some WIs simply resented the whole exercise. Gladys Gambriel, Wilstead WI’s President, was explicit in her indictment of scrapbooking: ‘This has not been a labour of love. We find none of us enjoys making scrapbooks’.[[111]](#footnote-111) In a letter inserted towards the back of her Institute’s submission, Gambriel substantiated her strong pronouncement in more detail:

“We have spent countless hours hunting for material, chasing up reluctant contributors, sticking awkward shapes with uncooperative dried out [unclear], trimming small items of newsprint and promptly losing them. We don’t consider it an interesting occupation to fill long winter evenings. […] *Do you sit down with a lapful of cuttings and a pot of paste?”* [[112]](#footnote-112)

Gambriel is certainly unusual in the resentful tone she adopts, lamenting how scrapbook-making was another unnecessary burden on top of an already packed socialising schedule. Members of Boxsted WI took the emotional register of their discontent to a new level, as they used one of their opening collages to compare the production of their scrapbook to a painful labour, through inserting a newspaper photograph of a crying baby, with the caption: ‘BIRTH of this SCRAPBOOK. NOBODY LOVED IT’ (Figure 8).[[113]](#footnote-113) The use of capitals and the visceral metaphor of childbirth emphasises the level of resentment towards the activity. Continuing the baby metaphor, they noted the book was ‘grudgingly adopted [and] soon clothed with sugar paper, colours to give continuity…Ten members got a scheme off the ground…. (Later: fallouts and stand-ins made it 12)’.[[114]](#footnote-114) Though over 2,500 WIs submitted entries to the competition, it was a voluntary competition, with just over 25 per cent of WIs taking part.[[115]](#footnote-115) It is therefore striking that Wilstead and Boxsted WI went to such lengths to submit their volumes, and subsequently preserve them, despite their negative experiences. These comments provide a rare, candid insight into a more resentful history of scrapbooking, an emotion which has not arisen in any other discussion of the practice in Britain or America to date. The insertion of these comments, and the continued survival of these scrapbooks, reflect the importance which women ascribed to these emotions and experiences.

Women embraced the freedom offered by the genre of the scrapbook to also record their discontent and anxieties about rural life. The decision to include these reflections should not come as a surprise, owing to the WI’s history of campaigning and the brief of the competition which invited women to reflect on the changes in transport and housing, as well as ‘the changes we expect…fear…[and] hope for’.[[116]](#footnote-116) The NFWI’s Jubilee took place during a time of much change in rural English life. The economies of many villages were at a stage of re-orientation, away from agriculture and towards the emerging service industries, leading especially younger villagers to look for work outside of the confines of the village. Improvements in transport meant that many middle-class families re-located to the country, while still finding employment in nearby towns or cities, leading to some concerns that villages would become little more than dormitories.[[117]](#footnote-117) The landscape of many villages was also changing, as new council housing, inaugurated as part of post-war building efforts, led to the erection of new properties in rural villages, leading new communities to settle in the village. As rural life underwent significant change, women turned to the pages of their scrapbook to protest some of the impact it had on their own lives and on the village. WI members were not the first group to politicise the scrapbook genre: scrapbooks have a rich history as sites of protest, as campaigners turned their scrapbooks into political tools, aiding them in their activist lives.[[118]](#footnote-118) In Britain, many suffrage campaigners created scrapbooks as they traced the contours of their activist journeys, whether for private or public purposes.[[119]](#footnote-119) Later twentieth-century campaigners also embraced the creative and visual qualities of scrapbooks as they made their own DIY zines to support their campaigning efforts.[[120]](#footnote-120) Similarly, these WI scrapbooks should be conceptualised as an act of feminist craft where women took the recording of their village, and their views on it, quite literally into their own hands, even if the WI was at the more conservative end of the campaigning spectrum. [[121]](#footnote-121) Mirroring developments in folk museums during this same periodm the competition foregrounded the observations and experiences of women, who used scissors, scraps, and glue to register their reservations over rural change.[[122]](#footnote-122)

The nature and scope of women’s complaints varied across their scrapbooks.[[123]](#footnote-123) Leighton WI members disliked the growing amount of space which shopkeepers took up on the village’s streets when advertising their products.[[124]](#footnote-124) Women in Stoke Ferry expressed their concern about the declining number of frogs and toads in their village, while in Whitchurch in Herefordshire, women included newspaper clippings from the *Monmouth Beacon*, reporting on the growing number of rats seen at the local rubbish dump.[[125]](#footnote-125) Juxtaposed next to beautiful hand illustrations of village services provided in Pembury, women noted under the title ‘what we lack’: a men’s hairdresser, a shoe repairer, a bakery, and a coffee shop, next to a small newspaper clipping criticising the costs of bus tickets for older residents.[[126]](#footnote-126) On a similar theme in Sturminster’s submission, scrapbook compilers lamented how many areas of the village lacked a pavement, sometimes because of a road’s ownership by public and private entities.[[127]](#footnote-127) Village infrastructural changes often aroused the most comment in the scrapbooks, as women turned to a range of creative strategies to convey their disapproval. During 1965, many villages saw the introduction of a water mains system for their village, which caused much disruption to village life such as in West Chiltington, where compilers described they were was ‘suffering’ during the replacement, while in Eversholt the change caused ‘considerable inconvenience and poor road conditions’.[[128]](#footnote-128) In Wilstead, women dedicated an entire page to ‘The Sewer’, noting the village’s ‘stoicism and many grumbles’ while the drains were being laid, using photographs and line drawings to provide a visual representation of the process.[[129]](#footnote-129) Moving from drainage to transport, women living in Whitchurch pasted a series of before and after photographs to show how the village had changed after the introduction of a new trunk road, the A40.[[130]](#footnote-130) A particularly powerful juxtaposition of photographs visually documents the demolishment of the greengrocer shop in order for the new road to be built. Newspaper articles recount the ensuing drama heralded by the new road; debates about whether the Ministry of Labour had legitimately taken the land on which the new road was built, the declining trade in the village, alongside the disorientation felt by many villagers. Here, women presented their village as a victim to larger authorities and organisations, using what little power they had to sway the historical record to their favour. As James Broun has shown through a reading of letters sent to the local press in 1980s Lincolnshire, communities did not hold back from sharing their denouncement of elements of rural change.[[131]](#footnote-131) Women’s community scrapbooks are a much earlier example and a different avenue through which women vocalised their discontent for present and future audiences. Often, women’s material choices functioned as a visual representation of this emotional investment in their village and disappointment over the alteration to the landscape and infrastructure.

Responding to the WI’s invitation to reflect on changes to transport, women conveyed the gendered impact of the reduction of transport services on their communities through collage.Women often criticised the cutting, or reduced timetable of bus services, uniquely impacting the women and children in the village; ‘Work outside the village is differcult [sic] for women as we do not have a daily bus’, wrote Eversholt WI.[[132]](#footnote-132) On a bright yellow page, Thaxted WI members reflect on the potential cuts to their village’s bus service, accompanied by a rise in fares. Headlines scream ‘Bus services to be cut’, ‘BUS FARES TO RISE’ and ‘Thaxted Parish Council oppose bus cuts’, against the serene pale blue and white background of a repurposed paper bag (Figure 9).[[133]](#footnote-133) The scrapbookers substantiate the headlines with a series of typescript paragraphs pasted underneath, leaving the last words of the page to the Parish Council – ‘undoubtedly we shall protest about it’.[[134]](#footnote-134) The chaotic page layout uses the visual drama to convey some of the emotion that such changes could provoke in the village.[[135]](#footnote-135) Turvey WI members dedicated a whole page to ‘TRAFFIC’, a title which they wrote and undermined in red to underscore the sense of urgency.[[136]](#footnote-136) Women share their disgust at the ‘roar of traffic’, leading to more dirt and dust in their homes, as well as the indifference of drivers, whose ‘favourite sport’ is ‘soaking the local’.[[137]](#footnote-137) The emotional register of the page reaches its crescendo when women note how ‘the noise, the dirt, the number of vehicles are all “pet” gratuities, but the one thing that makes us all fighting mad, is the speed of the traffic’.[[138]](#footnote-138) As a result of ‘the protests of indignant mothers’, the writers celebrate the introduction of a traffic warden during school time, to make the road safer for children and their parents.[[139]](#footnote-139) The only illustration on the page, a pen drawing of a queue of angry drivers scaring two villagers, visually encapsulates the emotional sentiments of its compilers. Going one step further, women living in Pembury convey one of the most powerful assertions of the gendered exclusion of technological change in their watercolour of the imagined future of commuting in 2015 AD (Figure 10).[[140]](#footnote-140) This painting captures suited-men, standing against a sky filled with yellow spaceship style vehicles, next to a sign signalling how they could travel to Hastings or London. The absence of women in this painting is striking as they did not see themselves as benefitting from new technological advancements. It was not just young women who were aware of how ‘mobilities became a new axis of social differentiation’; older women represent their transport needs as being badly served as they ‘shuffle and recombine the coordinates of time, space, location, voice, and memory’ in their scrapbooks, in this case to highlight feelings of exclusion.[[141]](#footnote-141)

Women did not hold back from using their social surveys to narrate rural change which impacted them, politicising the genre to offer a denouncement of some of the changes they witnessed. By including detail on these various village issues, women often presented themselves less as victims, and more as agents in attempting to rectify the situation to their advantage. As Michael McCluskey argues, craft can be understood as a ‘critical response to mass-produced, corporate culture and instantiations themselves of a turn towards the handmade and locally produced’.[[142]](#footnote-142) In women’s hands, these social surveys became tools of protest. The immortalising of their emotions in the scrapbooks is a visual demonstration of how scrapbooking, as an interactive site of the ‘history of everyday life’, was another route through which compilers could ‘channel their subjective, everyday experiences into the historical idiom’, as they scrapbooked with a present and future audience in mind.[[143]](#footnote-143)

**Conclusion**

The NFWI’s 1965 competition did not spell the end of village scrapbook competitions. The Newark Archaeological and Local History in Nottinghamshire launched a village scrapbook competition in 1970 ‘to collect information about village history from local people’, while in in 1983, the Bedfordshire Federation of Women’s Institutes launched ‘Focus On’, ‘a co-operative competition for a record which would give future generations a picture, verbal and pictorial, of what life was like in your village’. [[144]](#footnote-144) Though submissions could be loose-leaf or bound, Biddenham, Keysoe, and the winner Chalgrave were just some of the Institutes who submitted their entries as scrapbooks.[[145]](#footnote-145) Ten years later in 1992, the Federation of Northamptonshire Women’s Institutes also ran a scrapbook competition, entitled ‘A Year in the Life of the Village’. More recently, Whitchurch and Ganarew Local History created a scrapbook, which they ‘intended, as far as possible, to follow the original themes [of the 1965 scrapbook], but using 2020 technology and form’, as did Inkpen History Society.[[146]](#footnote-146) These scrapbook competitions are emblematic of a wider a resurgence in village activities associated with scrapbooks during the pandemic, as WIs and local history societies digitalised and published their scrapbooks online, while others such as Radwinter WI arranged an online presentation of the scrapbook to bring residents together online during times of isolation.[[147]](#footnote-147) Despite digital advances impacting the creation of these new volumes, scrapbook competitions have remained a popular and enduring form of community engagement. The scrapbook, owing to its capability to host a range of items, has continued to be an attractive repository for village information, moulded to the changing aims and interests of their compilers.

This chapter has joined up various episodes of village scrapbooking in twentieth-century Britain and introduced a new set of historical actors who scrapbooked on the village, charting the first exploration into community scrapbooking practice, as well as the shift from individual to communal village scrapbooking which took place in thousands of villages. By the mid-twentieth century, what had begun as an activity recommended by and for male clerics and antiquarians had shifted to one carried out by rural residents with an interest in their local heritage, whether WI or local history society members, or other individual villagers. As associational culture grew, so too did scrapbooks as a form of record-keeping, embraced by a range of associations and its members, produced by many villagers in the WI and beyond. In the WI’s 1965 competition, the scrapbook permitted women to respond creatively to a specific set of research topics, drawing on elements of the regional survey movement and more recent uses of surveys by the social sciences. In response to these competitions, women recorded both the mundane and exceptional experiences of rural life. This was one of the first times that scrapbooking assumed a distinctly regional flavour, in its continued focus on the village, showing the ways in which the medium’s use by different groups was borne out of specific anxieties and emotions about the pace of change in the countryside.

The 1965 competition marked the first time that scrapbooks were used as a form of social survey on a large scale. The focus on social survey, alongside the issuing of a brief, marked one of the first attempts to impose an element of order on the scrapbook genre, which can be interpreted as one of the first attempts to professionalise this ‘untamed species’ of life writing.[[148]](#footnote-148) Yet the brief enabled women responded to the brief with a great degree of agency as they decided how they would collect their data and then present it for the scrapbook reader. By subjecting some of these different data collection and presentation modes to analysis, we begin to explore how different communities participated in the ‘history of everyday life’ on a more personal, interactive level. Many women, like June Field who we met at the opening of this chapter, conveyed a great sense of pride at their collaborative efforts, while others did not hold back from registering their anger and resentment at whiling away their free time working on the volume. The incorporation of these subjective responses into these communal scrapbooks illustrates the continued interplay between collective identities and an individual’s sense of selfhood in post-war Britain. The inclusion of women’s comments on compilation, unprompted by the NFWI’s brief, show the value women ascribed to these feelings, so much so that they wanted readers to be under no illusion as to the processes underpinning the creation of the scrapbook. The pages of some of these scrapbooks became pages of protest, not only in relation to scrapbook making, but also the changes that women had witnessed as the countryside changed after the war, showing that women shared similar self-reflexive tendencies as Mass Observers. The entrenched position of MO in British history has led us to overlook other more creative, spontaneous, and messy forms of knowledge production in rural communities, as these social surveying currents became incorporated into the British rural society. By moving away from this academic, organisational focus, we can see how these social surveying currents infused post-war associational culture in the form of specific initiatives, such as the WI’s competition. Although WI women did not consistently adopt the same rigorous methodologies as those employed by social scientists, their activities formed part of a wider democratisation of anthropological techniques.If we are to usefully extend out histories of scrapbooking into the twentieth century, then the gradual growth and evolution of village scrapbook competitions must feature as a vital part of this story, which not only enhances our understanding of scrapbooking, but also histories of post-war associational culture, social surveys, and selfhood.

1. Transcript of interview with June Field on 23.2.09 about Smarden Women’s Institute, Smarden Women’s Institute, Smarden Women’s Institute Archive, http://smardenwi.yolasite.com/archive.php. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Whitchurch and Ganarew Local History Society, "The Women’s Institute Scrap Book 1965," 1965, https://wagshistory.com/whitchurch-and-ganarew-womens-institute-scrap-book-1965/. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For example of painted cover, see Great Waltham WI, Great Waltham Women's Institute scrapbook, 1965, T/Z 29/13: Essex Records Office, Chelmsford.

For example of cross-stitched cover, see "Scrapbook Cover," https://ringwayandhalebarns-wi.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/7/2/127225288/scrapbook\_cover\_1.jpg.

For example of embroidered cover, see Silverstone Women's Institute Scrapbook of Village Life, 1965, ZB0233/1, Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. "WI Scrapbook of 1965," Pembury Village, 1965, http://web.archive.org/web/20171212011407/https://pembury.org/history/archive/wi-scrapbook-of-1965/. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For further discussion on the definitions of scrapbooks, see Leigh Ina Hunt, "Victorian Passion to Modern Phenomenon: A Literary and Rhetorical Analysis of Two Hundred Years of Scrapbooks and Scrapbook Making" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Texas, 2006), chap. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For more on the importance of the category of ‘ordinariness’, see Claire Langhamer, "‘Who the hell are ordinary people?’ Ordinariness as a category of historical analysis," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 28 (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott, and Patricia P. Buckler, eds., *The scrapbook in American life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); Jessica Helfand, *Scrapbooks: an American history* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Ellen Gruber Garvey, *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks From The Civil War To The Harlem Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Works dedicated to uncovering the histories of scrapbooking in Britain have largely focused on scrapbooks made by specific individuals (such as suffrage activists, police detectives, and literary fans) or on certain events (such as war). For example, see Margaret R. Higonnet, "Three nurses’ life-writing: scrapbook, portrait, and construction of a self," in *Women Writing War*, ed. Katharina von Hammerstein, Barbara Kosta, and Julie Shoults (De Gruyter, 2018), 247-268. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Eloise Moss, "Scrapbooks: a proliferation of meaning," in *Approaching historical sources in their contexts: space, time, and performance*, ed. Sarah Barber and C. M. Peniston-Bird (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 224-241, 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For an introduction to this literature, see Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, Wisconsin Studies in American Autobiography, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).

For a flavour of literature which relies on textual forms of life writing in modern British historiography, see Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Chris Waters, "Autobiography, Nostalgia, and the Changing Practices of Working-Class Selfhood," in *Singular Continuities: Tradition, Nostalgia and Identity in Modern British Culture*, ed. George K. Behlmer and Fred M. Leventhal (Stanford Stanford University Press, 2000), 178-195; Ben Jones, "The Uses of Nostalgia," *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 3 (2010); Joe Moran, "Private lives, public histories: the diary in twentieth-century Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 1 (2015); Alison S Fell, *Women as Veterans in Britain and France after the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For a more recent articulation of this focus on individual selfhood, see Emily Robinson et al., "Telling stories about post-war Britain: Popular individualism and the ‘crisis’ of the 1970s," *Twentieth Century British History* 28, no. 2 (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Jon Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me: The Search for Community in Post-war England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott, and Patricia P. Buckler, "Introduction," in *The scrapbook in American life*, ed. Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott, and Patricia P. Buckler (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 1-25, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The current chronological foci of modern British scrapbook scholarship has concentrated on the Victorian period and subsequently taken an episodic focus on scrapbooking in the first half of the twentieth century. For a flavour of this Victorian scholarship, see Patrizia Di Bello, *Women's albums and photography in Victorian England: ladies, mothers and flirts* (Aldershot: Routledge, 2007).

For example of some of this interwar scrapbook scholarship, see Eloise Moss, "The scrapbooking detective: Frederick Porter Wensley and the limits of ‘celebrity’ and ‘authority’ in inter-war Britain," *Social History* 40, no. 1 (2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For more on how scrapbooks have been defined, see Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, "Is It a diary, commonplace book, scrapbook, or whatchamacallit? Six years of exploration in New England's manuscript archives," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 44, no. 1 (2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Garvey, *Writing with Scissors*. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Notable exceptions include Moss, "The scrapbooking detective."; Bridget Moynihan, "Digital Découpage: Reading and Prototyping the Material Poetics and Queer Ephemera of the Edwin Morgan Scrapbooks, 1931-1966" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinbrugh, 2020); Justin Fantauzzo, *The Other Wars: The Experience and Memory of the First World War in the Middle East and Macedonia*, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

For more on the historic gendering of scrapbook making, see Amy Mecklenburg-Faenger, "Trifles, Abominations, and Literary Gossip: Gendered Rhetoric and Nineteenth-Century Scrapbooks," *Genders*, no. 55 (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. For more on this boom, see Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Harvard University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Hunt, ‘Victorian passion to modern phenomenon’, p. 15; Gillian Russell, ‘The neglected history of the history of printed ephemera’, *Melbourne Historical Journal* 42, no. 1 (1 January 2014): 25.

For a broader discussion on the increasing scholarly value of reading ephemeral material, see Russell, ‘The neglected history of the history of printed ephemera’.

. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. For some of this literature on changes in urban Britain centred around de-industrialisation, see Jim Tomlinson, "De-industrialization Not Decline: A New Meta-narrative for Post-war British History," *Twentieth Century British History* 27, no. 1 (2016); Pete Hodson, "Titanic Struggle: Memory, Heritage and Shipyard Deindustrialization in Belfast," *History Workshop Journal* 87 (2019); Jim Tomlinson, "De-industrialization: strengths and weaknesses as a key concept for understanding post-war British history," *Urban History* 47, no. 2 (2020); Aaron Andrews, "Dereliction, decay and the problem of de-industrialization in Britain, c.1968–1977," *Urban History* 47, no. 2 (2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For example, see Sian Edwards, *Youth Movements, Citizenship and the English Countryside: Creating Good Citizens, 1930-1960* (Springer, 2017), 93; Laura Newman, *Germs in the English Workplace, c. 1880–1945*, vol. 44 (Routledge, 2021).

For example of use by Victoria County Histories, see Philip Riden and Charles Insley, "Ashton," in *A History of the County of Northampton*, ed. Philip Riden and Charles Insley (London: 2002), 59-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Jane Robinson, *A force to be reckoned with: a history of the Women's Institute* (London: Virago, 2012). The WI’s own organisational histories offer even less on the competition, even in the context of the role of WI’s in preserving and enhancing their village’s heritage. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Rosemary Shirley, "Pylons and frozen peas: the Women’s Institute goes electric," in *Transforming the countryside: the electrification of rural Britain*, ed. Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt, and Karen Sayer (London: Routledge, 2016), 135-153; Rosemary Shirley, "The Networked Village: Women’s Institute Golden Jubilee Scrapbooks," in *Rural Modernity, Everyday Life and Visual Culture* (Routledge, 2016), 99-132. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Letter to County Secretaries from Principal Assistant Secretary, 10 June 1966, WI Scrapbook Competition, 1964-1969, 5FWI/B/2/1/123, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics, London. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This phrase comes from Garvey, *Writing with Scissors*. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Neville Truman, *The care of churches: a manual of self-help for all who are interested in our churches* (London: P. Allan, 1935), 25-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 26; *Woodforde: Passages from the Five Volumes of the Diary of a Country Parson, 1758-1802*, ed. John Beresford, 5 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1924-1935). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Bishop of Ely, "Message from the Bishop," *The Ely Diocesan Gazette*, 1936, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Gordon Ward, "The Village Scrap-book," *Kent County Journal*, 1936, 13-14, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Phipps, "Leading Smarden up the Garden," *Daily Mail*, 15 October 1936. For more on this fascination, see Laura Carter, *Histories of Everyday Life: The Making of Popular Social History in Britain, 1918-1979* (Oxford University Press, 2021), chap. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Phipps, "Leading Smarden up the Garden,” *Daily Mail*. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Helen McCarthy, "Parties, Voluntary Associations and Democratic Politics In Interwar Britain," *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 04 (2007): 891, 893. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. For more on this, see Jeremy Frank Sebastian Burchardt, "'A new rural civilization': village halls, community and citizenship in the 1920s," (2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Jeremy Burchardt, "State and Society in the English Countryside: The Rural Community Movement 1918–39," *Rural History* 23, no. 1 (2012): 85, 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Caitríona Beaumont, "What do women want? Housewives’ associations, activism and changing representations of women in the 1950s," *Women's History Review* 26, no. 1 (2017): 148 Shirley, "The Networked Village: Women’s Institute Golden Jubilee Scrapbooks," 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. For example, see references to Hertford Heath and Coates, Isle of Ely’s scrapbook competitions in "Wits and Bits," *Home and Country*, March 1950, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. For reference to Manchetter’s gift of homemade scrapbooks for elderly patients in Manchester, see "For Others," *Home and Country*, December 1952, 368. For reference to scrapbooks made for children, see "To cheer the children," *Home and Country*, November 1953, 376. For just one of many references to scrapbooking old Christmas cards, see reference to Warton’s Christmas card scrapbook competition "The fruits of many labours," *Home and Country*, April 1953, 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. For a flavour of some of these scrapbooks, see **S**crapbook of Willie Cooperman relating largely to his involvement with Brighton and Hove Maccabi Association, c.1935-c.1955, ACC13547/1, The Keep, Brighton, Sussex; Violet Audrey Jarvis, Diary and scrap book of the Cottingham, Yorkshire, East Riding, WVS Darby and Joan Club, 1948-1976, WRVS20110054, Royal Voluntary Service Heritage Collection, Devizes; Hornchurch (Park Lane) Co-operative Women's Guild scrapbook, 1965, WCG/8/49/1, London Bishopsgate Institute Special Collections and Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Elizabeth Ann Dillenburg, "Constructing and Contesting “the Girlhood of Our Empire”: Girls’ Culture, Labor, and Mobility in Britain, South Africa, and New Zealand, c. 1830-1930" (PhD University of Minnesota, 2019), 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. W.V.S. Scrap Book Competition, 1956, CN.M. 8/55 Royal Voluntary Service Heritage Collection, Devizes; "The 1956 Scrapbooks," *W.V.S Bulletin*, July 1956, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. "Villace [sic] history," *Yarmouth Independent*, 9 April 1938, 10. [I need to do carry out more research on this form of scrapbooking to find out to what extent it was a history or displaying the early shifts to a survey.] [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Carter, *Histories of Everyday Life: The Making of Popular Social History in Britain, 1918-1979*, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. "Villace [sic] history,” *Yarmouth Independent*, 10 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Paul Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 100-102. For example, see Paul Thompson’s discussion of work by C.M.Arensberg and S.T.Kimball in ibid., 103-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Kathleen Kay, "Woman’s World," *Worthing Herald*, 5 December 1947, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. For reference to scrapbook competition in Surrey in 1950, see V. R Martin, "County Challenge Cup," *Home and Country*, March 1950, 71.

For 1952 competition in West Sussex, see "Round the East Hants District," *West Sussex Gazette and South of England Advertiser*, 15 May 1952, 3.

For 1951-1952 competition in Cheshire, see "Scrapbook history," *Nantwich Chronicle*, 1 March 1952.

For entries to East Sussex’s 1953 competition, see volumes deposited in The Keep, West Sussex, such as Heathfield WI, Coronation year scrapbook, 1953, WI/61/4/1, East Sussex Record Office, The Keep, Brighton. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. K Swanzy, "Local Histories and Scrapbooks," *Home and Country*, May 1952, 136-137, 136-137.

In 1951, the NFWI recognised the value of these activities to such an extent, that they even set up a course, ‘An Approach to History through a Village and its People’ at Denman College, designed to equip women with the research skills required to carry out their research and compile their scrapbooks. For a discussion on the launch of this course, see "Denman College," *Home and Country*, August 1951, 236-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. For archival material relating to the Northamptonshire competition, see Village Scrapbooks, The Joan Wake Collection, Box No. 137, Northamptonshire Records Office, Northampton.

For material on the Oxfordshire competiton see Village Scrapbook Competition, O41/1/C15/19, Oxfordshire History Centre, Oxford.

For material on the Bedfordshire competition, see Scrapbook Projects, uncatalogued colllection, CRS4, Bedfordshire Record Office, Bedofrd. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. For list of entries to a Coronation Scrapbook competition in Northampton in 1953, seeCoronation Village Scrapbook Competition Classified List of Entries, 1954, Village Scrapbooks, The Joan Wake Collection, Box No. 137, Northamptonshire Records Office, Northampton. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. For more on this, see Carter, *Histories of Everyday Life: The Making of Popular Social History in Britain, 1918-1979*, chap 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Laura Carter describes this a central tenant of the ‘history of everyday life’. For more see ibid., Intro. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid., 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Minutes of the General Education Sub-Committee, 19 June 1963, 5FWI/E/1/1/1, Records of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes, 1, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Minutes of the General Education Sub-Committee, 15 November 1963, 5FWI/E/1/1/1, Records of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. In November 1963 members did not like the initial name of the competition ‘Village Scrap Book Competition, 1965’, and instead agreed on ‘Our Village Today – Jubilee Scrap Book, 1965. Executive Committee Minutes Volume 29, 28 November 1963, 5FWI/A/1/1/29, 950, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Letter from Gabrielle Pike to WI Presidents, Our Village Today Jubilee Scrap Book, 1965, 24 April 1964, WI Scrapbook Competition, 1964-1969, 5FWI/B/2/1/123, 1, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics, London, Records of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid., 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Minutes of the General Education Sub-Committee, 18 June 1964, 5FWI/E/1/1/1, Records of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. For more, see David Matless, "Regional surveys and local knowledges: the geographical imagination in Britain, 1918-39," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid., 467-8.

Though advice books aimed at budding researchers in the regional survey movement encouraged them to acquire a range of material as part of their surveys (from maps to photographs, charts, and postcards), there was little to no mention of this material being assimilated into a scrapbook. Ibid., 468.. The closest reference to scrapbooking came in H Barnard’s reflections on the stamp album. For more on this, see ibid., 477-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. NFWI Press Release: Village Scrapbook Competition, May 1965, WI Scrapbook Competition, 1964-1969, 5FWI/B/2/1/123, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics, London, Records of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Langhamer, "‘Who the hell are ordinary people?’ Ordinariness as a category of historical analysis," 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. *Home and Country* reported that they received over 2,500 entries to the competition. Assuming that every Institute followed the instructions that a minimum of 6 women had to work on an institute’s entry, at least 150,000 women would have been involved in some element of the competition. For more, see "Scrapbooks of the Countryside," *Home and Country*, July 1966, 260-261, 261.

The national winners of the competition were Outgate WI in Westmorland (for the North of England and the Isle of Man category), Toddington WI in Bedfordshire (for the South of England and Channel Islands), Radwinter WI in Essex, Llanilar WI in Cardiganshire (for the West of England and Wales) and Tregaron WI in Cardiganshire (for the Welsh category). For more, see National Federation of Women’s Institutes Jubilee Scrapbok Competition, WI Scrapbook Competition, 1964-1969, 5FWI/B/2/1/123, 1, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics, London, Records of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. "WI Scrapbook of 1965." [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Ashton Women’s Institute, 1965 Scrapbook of Ashton, 1965, Anne Sale Personal Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. "Womens [sic] Institute," https://bishopstoneandhintonparva.org/womens-institutue/. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Scrapbook 'Collingtree 1965' with monochrome and colour photographs, drawings and maps, ZB0445/2, Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Kathleen Routh, "Your Village A Survey by the NFWI," *Home and Country*, July 1950, 181; Inez Jenkins, *Your Village: A Survey of Amenities and Public Services in Rural Areas* (1950). This survey extended the parameters of an earlier survey on water and sewerage, published in 1954, and was cited in Parliament in discussions on drainage and water supply. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Caitríona Beaumont, "‘Where to Park the Pram’? Voluntary Women's Organisations, Citizenship and the Campaign for Better Housing in England, 1928–1945," *Women's History Review* 22, no. 1 (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Joan Wake, *How to compile a history and present day record of village life*, 3rd ed. (Northampton: Northamptonshire and Soke of Peterborough Federation of Women’s Institutes, 1935); Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Helen McCarthy, "Feminism, selfhood and social research professional women’s organizations in 1960s Britain," in *Precarious Professionals*, ed. Heidi Egginton and Zoë Thomas, Gender, Identities and Social Change in Modern Britain (University of London Press, 2021), 287-304, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid., 292-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Mike Savage, *Identities and social change in Britain since 1940: The politics of method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. James Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949* (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2013), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Eight Ash Green WI, Eight Ash Green [Copford] Women's Institute scrapbook, 1965, T/Z 29/15, Essex Records Office; Renhold WI Scrapbook 'The Commonplace Book of Renhold' entered into the competition organised by the National Federation of Women's Institutes, 1965, X351/32, Bedfordshire Records Office, Bedford. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Langhamer, "‘Who the hell are ordinary people?’ Ordinariness as a category of historical analysis." [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. "Scrapbooks of the Countryside." [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. For a flavour of this scholarship, see Jon Lawrence, "Inventing the ‘traditional working class’: A re-analysis of interview notes from Young and Willmott's Family and kinship in East London," *The Historical Journal* 59, no. 2 (2016); Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me*; Lise Butler, *Michael Young, Social Science, and the British Left, 1945-1970* (Oxford University Press, 2020); Valerie Wright, "Making their own fun: children’s play in high-rise estates in Glasgow in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Children’s Experiences of Welfare in Modern Britain*, ed. Jonathan Taylor Siân Pooley (Institute of Historical Research: University of London Press, 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Savage, *Identities and social change in Britain since 1940: The politics of method*, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Penny Summerfield, "Mass-Observation: Social Research or Social Movement?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 20, no. 3 (1985): 449. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. For more on this self-reflexivity, see Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949*, 374-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Garvey, *Writing with Scissors*, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. West Chiltington WI, West Chiltington 1965, 1965, Miscellaneous Papers, MP/968, West Sussex Records Office, Chichester. Unpaginated. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Tucker, Ott, and Buckler, "Introduction," 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. See document inserted in the front of West Chiltington WI, West Chiltington 1965, 1965, Miscellaneous Papers, MP/968, West Sussex Records Office, Chichester. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Radwinter WI, Radwinter Scrapbook 1965, 1965, Radwinter Women’s Institute Archive, Radwinter, Essex. Unpaginated. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. "WI Scrapbook of 1965." [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Letter from Molly Millard to C.P.C, 7th February 1966, Press Reports, 5FWI/B/2/1/017, 1, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics, London, Records of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Cait McKinney, *Information activism: a queer history of lesbian media technologies* (Duke University Press, 2020), 2, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. "Scrapbooks of the Countryside," 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. For more reflections on women’s self-effacing strategies, see Smith and Watson, *Women, Autobiography, Theory*. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Nikolas S. Rose, *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self*, 2nd ed. (London: Free Association Books, 1999), xxx. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Nickolas Rose, "Assembling the modern self," in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Roy Porter (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1996), 224-248. Such sentiments are similar to the argument that Patrick Joyce makes in relation to the diary as a ‘technique for managing the self’. For more see Joyce, *Democratic Subjects*. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Helfand, *Scrapbooks: an American history*, 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me*. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949*, 375. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me*, 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. [I’m aware that this point needs development.] [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Jane Hamlett, "Mothering in the Archives: Care and the Creation of Family Papers and Photographs in Twentieth-Century Southern England," *Past & Present* 246, no. Supplement 15 (2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Ely, "Message from the Bishop," 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. For example of positive acknowledgements, see Whitchurch and Ganarew Local History Society, "The Women’s Institute Scrap Book 1965."; "Chedworth WI Scrapbook of 1965," https://chedworth.org.uk/chedworth-wi-scrap-book-of-1965/; Norton-in-Hales Scrap Book, "Norton-in-Hales Scrapbook 1965," 2 August 2017, https://www.nortoninhales.org/single-post/2017/08/02/norton-in-hales-wi-jubilee-scrap-book-1965. It would have been an achievement if every villager wholeheartedly supported the project as Westmorland WI effused after they had won the Northern prize. For more see "Scrapbooks of the Countryside," 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me*, 11.

Great Doddington’s scrapbookers in Northamptonshire also adopted an optimistic tone; ‘We hope this record will show that Doddington folk are friendly folk, and any newcomer who is willing is quickly drawn into village affairs’. For more, see Women's Institute Golden Jubilee scrapbook: 'Great Doddington Today 1965, ZA3814, Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton.
As historians of rural England have shown, the acceptance of new arrivals into the countryside did not happen overnight. Long-term members of the village could come to resent the arrival of middle-class urban dwellers to their village, as such demographic changes often accompanied a broader re-orientation of the rural economy away from agriculture and change in rural life, which they resented. Jeremy Burchardt, *Paradise Lost: Rural Idyll And Social Change Since 1800* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2002), 167. For more, see Howard Newby, *Green and pleasant land?: social change in rural England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), 22-23. For more on how the arrival of newcomers impacts the nature of a village’s social life, ibid., 164-172. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. One contributor to Shorwell’s scrapbook recounted in a poem how upon being invited to write for the village scrapbook it ‘was not a very easy task’, though she did not elaborate on why this was the case, presumably because she had not been presented with the opportunity before. Shorwell Women's Institute News, "1965 Scrapbook," https://shorwellwi.org.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/1965.pdf, 39.

Members of Dyke WI in Lincolnshire were daunted by the prospect of finding enough material, owing to the absence of a village church, council, and having only 84 houses in their village. After visits to every farm, and conversations with various residents, they had plenty of information to use when populating their book, which went on to take the crown for Lincolnshire. See comments from Jane Wheatley published on "Dyke WI," History of Dyke, http://dykehistory.org.uk/dyke-wi. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Dianne Redfern, interview by Cherish Watton, 26 November 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Wilstead WI, Wilstead 1965, 1965, X939/58/5/1, Bedfordshire Archives, Bedford. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Boxsted WI, Boxted Today, 1965, D/Z 457, Essex Record Office, Chelmsford. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. For details on the number of Women’s Institutes in 1966, see Annual Reports of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, 1965, 5FWI/A/2/2/09, 4, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics, London. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Letter from Gabrielle Pike to WI Presidents, Our Village Today Jubilee Scrap Book, 1965, 24 April 1964, WI Scrapbook Competition, 1964-1969, 5FWI/B/2/1/123, 1, The Women’s Library, London School of Economics, London, Records of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. For more on these developments, see Newby, *Green and pleasant land?: social change in rural England*; Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*; Jeremy Burchardt, "Historicizing counterurbanization: In-migration and the reconstruction of rural space in Berkshire (UK), 1901–51," *Journal of Historical geography* 38, no. 2 (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Garvey, *Writing with Scissors*, chaps 4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Cherish Watton, "Suffrage scrapbooks and emotional histories of women’s activism," *Women's History Review* (2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. For a flavour of work on zines, see Margaret J. Finders, "Queens and Teen Zines: Early Adolescent Females Reading Their Way toward Adulthood," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1996); Janice Radway, "Zines, Half-Lives, and Afterlives: On the Temporalities of Social and Political Change," *PMLA* 126, no. 1 (2011); Red Chidgey, "Reassess Your Weapons: the making of feminist memory in young women's zines," *Women's History Review* 22, no. 4 (2013); Red Chidgey, "‘A Modest Reminder’: Performing Suffragette Memory in a British Feminist Webzine," in *Cultural Memories of Nonviolent Struggles: Powerful Times*, ed. Anna Reading and Tamar Katriel (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 52-70; Elizabeth Groeneveld, *Making Feminist Media: Third-Wave Magazines on the Cusp of the Digital Age* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016); Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from underground: zines and the politics of alternative culture*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Microcosm Publishing, 2017); Sarah Kenny, "Ripped, torn and cut: pop, politics and punk fanzines from 1976," *Contemporary British History* 33, no. 1 (2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Maggie Andrews, *The acceptable face of feminism: the Women's Institute as a social movement*, New and revised edition. ed. (London Lawrence & Wishart Limited, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. For more on the this folk museum context, see Carter, *Histories of Everyday Life: The Making of Popular Social History in Britain, 1918-1979*, chap 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Some of the material for this section of the piece draws on material submitted in an article currently under peer-review: Cherish Watton and Tiia Sahrakorpi, *Crafting change: gendered representations of 1960s techno-cultural change in rural English scrapbooks* [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Leighton WI, Leighton Today 1965, 1965. Thank you to David Holloway, editor of Leighton News for sharing scans of the scrapbook with me. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Whitchurch and Ganarew Local History Society, "The Women’s Institute Scrap Book 1965." **[check ref]** [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. "WI Scrapbook of 1965," 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Sturminster-Marshall WI, "Our Village Today," 1965, http://sturminstermarshallvillagehistory.org.uk/Files/images/Page\_48.jpg, 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. West Chiltington WI, West Chiltington 1965, 1965, Miscellaneous Papers, MP/968, West Sussex Records Office, Chichester; Eversholt Women’s Institute, "Women’s Institute 1965 Eversholt," 1965, https://village.eversholt.org.uk/eversholt-history/womens-institute/. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Wilstead WI, Wilstead 1965, 1965, X939/58/5/1, Bedfordshire Archives, Bedford. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Whitchurch and Ganarew Local History Society, "The Women’s Institute Scrap Book 1965." [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Broun, "Place, identity and social conflict in post-industrial England." [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Eversholt Women’s Institute, "Women’s Institute 1965 Eversholt."

For references to other scrapbooks which denounce the village’s bus services, see Pembury, Inkpen, Whitchurch and Great Waltham. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Thaxted WI, Thaxted Women's Institute scrapbook, 1965, T/Z 29/14: Essex Records Office, Chelmsford. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. For more on visual drama see Elizabeth R Epperly, "Visual Drama: Capturing Life in LM Montgomery's Scrapbooks," in *The intimate life of LM Mongomery* (2005), 189-209, 194-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. "Turvey WI Scrap Book for 1965," 14 October 2020, https://www.turveyhistory.org.uk/topics/civic-life/turvey-wi-scrap-book-for-1965-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Penny Tinkler, "Going Places or Out of Place? Representations of Mobile Girls and Young Women in Late-1950s and 1960s Britain," *Twentieth Century British History* 32, no. 2 (2021); Tucker, Ott, and Buckler, "Introduction," 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Michael McCluskey, "Local Production: Craft and Film-Making in Interwar Britain," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 12, no. 3 (2019): 220. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Carter, *Histories of Everyday Life: The Making of Popular Social History in Britain, 1918-1979*, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Pat Finn, "Winthorpe Village Scrap Book Competition," April 2007, https://www.winthorpe.org.uk/winthorpe-village-scrap-book-competition; Bedfordshire Federation of Women’s Institutes Baker Trophy, Correspondence re. WI scrapbook competition for the Baker trophy, X939/2/9/3/22, Bedfordshire Record Office, Bedford. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. “Focus on Keysoe, 1983” scrapbook showing the village [placed joint fourth in the county], X939/84, Bedfordshire Record Office, Bedford; Scrapbook entitled 'Focus On Biddenham' 1983, X939/31/5/4 Bedfordshire Record Office, Bedford; “Focus on Chalgrave, 1983” scrapbook showing the village [the winning entry in the competition], X680/3, Bedfordshire Record Office, Bedford. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. "Whitchurch and Ganarew 2020 A 'Scrapbook' record of daily life

Prepared by members of Whitchurch and Ganarew Local History Society," July 2020, https://wagshistorycom.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/wags-scrapbook-2020-edition..pdf, 2; "Scrapbook for 2020 Pandemic," http://history.inkpenvillage.co.uk/WI/2020%20Covid-19/COVID%20Scrapbook%202020%202.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. For example of a WI scrapbook shared online in 2020, see "Turvey WI Scrap Book for 1965."

Many thanks to Judith Thompson, President of Radwinter WI, for this information on the online screening of the scrapbook. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Helfand, *Scrapbooks: an American history*, 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)