

WI Life

April 2007 Issue 3

KNITTING PRETTY

Aneeta Patel keeps
her WI in stitches

OUT AND ABOUT

Visiting East Yorks
and Lincs South
federations

MY CORNISH GARDEN

Tropical transformation
of Trist House Garden

REPORTAGE

Slavery ended 200
years ago – so why is
it still rife in Britain?

DENMAN COLLEGE PROGRAMME 2007-8
yours with this issue of *WI Life*



Fact file

DOB: 1/8/1975
Occupation: Artist and knitting teacher
Member of: N1WI, in Islington, North London
WI member for how long? Since October 2006
Why did you join? I went along out of curiosity to the first meeting and it seemed like so much fun that I decided to join straight away.



On the spot

Text message or phone call? Text, definitely, because it means I can knit, watch TV, check my emails and cook my dinner all at the same time
Cake or salad? Cake! Chocolate, with fresh cream please.
Bus or tube? Neither – I ride my bike everywhere
Rom com or action flick? Strangely, I love Arnold Schwarzenegger films. He's the antithesis of everything I believe in but a fantasy man should be, shouldn't he?
Most like to meet? Yoko Ono. She's ridiculously talented but so underrated
Have you got an iPod? No – but I do knit iPod covers.

What's the best part of the job?

I really feel that by introducing a creative angle into people's lives I'm making a difference to the world. I have no delusions of grandeur but I think the most important thing in the world is to be creative. If there was no creativity, there'd be no science, or language, or medicine. Everything stems from an imaginative mind and, whether you choose to show that by knitting a scarf or painting the Sistine Chapel, I think that's such a positive thing.

What else do you enjoy?

I studied as a painter and enjoy that when I have the time but I'd give up *everything* before I gave up reading. My favourite book is the *Ramayana*, an ancient Hindu text about honour, duty and being a good human being.

Why does the WI appeal?

I get so much out of meeting other women and it's great to know that whatever the subject I'm going to hear so many interesting opinions on it. I get more out of meeting one woman than out of meeting a whole group of men, so what could be more inspiring than having a meeting of minds with so many women every month?

What's your ambition?

I'm not really ambitious in life but when I lie down at night I want to know I did good things and that I didn't hurt anyone's feelings. That's my ambition every day. **WI**

● *Aneeta is writing a book on knitting called Knitty Gritty, which will be released in September 2008 by A&C Black. For information on her knitting projects visit www.knittingsos.co.uk*

A good yarn

WI Life cover girl Aneeta Patel is a knitting teacher in London. **Neal Maidment** meets her to talk WI, creativity... and Arnold Schwarzenegger

What started you knitting?

I've always loved making stuff and was creative from a young age. My aunt taught me to knit when I was five and I've loved it ever since. I find the repetitive movement very calming and meditative but what I love most about knitting is that you never have to be unproductive. Even when you're just sitting in front of the TV, you can still do something productive.

Why go into knitting teaching?

It started by accident. I was voluntarily teaching one class a week for a local charity – the Working Well Trust for Bangladeshi women with long-term mental health problems – and through that a knitting shop in Islington, Loop,

asked me to start teaching knitting classes there. I didn't think it would take off like this but things spiralled. Now I'm inundated. My sister says the business is becoming an empire.

What sort of clients?

A real mix. I still teach the Bangladeshi women but most of my clients are professional women in their 20s and 30s who decided that they needed some creativity in their lives and chose to express that through knitting.

Is it easy to learn?

Oh, yes. If there was no language barrier, I could have anyone knitting in five minutes and starting off on their first knitting project within an hour.

PHOTO: CHARLIE SAINSBURY-PLAICE