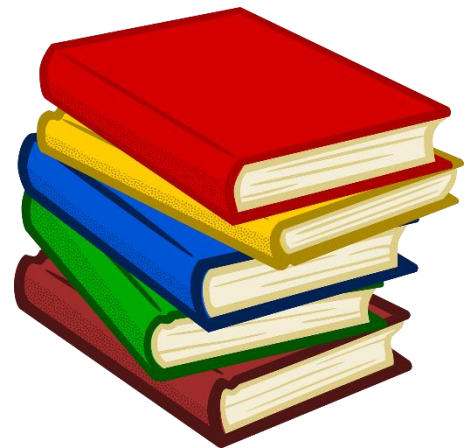




**PALS (Performing Arts, Leisure and Sport)**  
**Poetry Competition Entries**  
*Moving On*



At nine years old my Dad gave me an empty box, "It's yours to fill" he said  
"Why" I asked "and what with?", my voice was full of dread"  
"All your favourite toys and books, but the box has got to close";  
"I've been posted, we're leaving here, we're moving on, don't worry,  
But hurry now and pack your box, that's all that we can carry".

One week on, my box is piled with others in a stack,  
Our home is just a house now, there's nothing left to pack.  
We're marching out and moving on, we'll stop somewhere on the road  
Goodbye to friends, to neighbours, to dogs (and cats, but they don't care)  
Our boxes on a truck depart, we'll see them when we're there.

We're on the road, 500 miles to go, we stop at services or picnic in the cold  
My arm rest is the important things my mother wants to hold  
At last "we're here" said Dad, he's seen the house before  
We're marching in, "Is this my room?, it's time to explore  
"Will I like it here?", "Are there any dogs next door?"

The truck's arrived outside at last, they drove a decent pace  
I've fallen down the stairs again, (they're in a different place)  
The kettle's on, there are cups of tea and cake.  
Here's my box with all its friends, the house becomes our home  
Hello new neighbours, soon to be friends?, hello new life to come

We've been here such a long while, we feel like we belong  
Seasons passed, three birthdays too, family have been and gone  
We've got the accent and the slang, we've explored the beaches and rocks  
But Dad came home again today and gave me an empty box....

**Susan Roberts, Shirley WI - Winner**

This young bird is about to fly –  
To leave the nest and wave goodbye.  
She'll dally here for a summer break  
Then take her leave; make no mistake.

For she will soar into the blue  
And look abroad to pastures new.  
Where granite halls and mountains stare,  
New to her days. But she won't care.  
To find her way among the stars  
And make her mark, that girl of ours.

These special times, which now we see  
Remind us how we used to be.  
Look to the future and learn to adapt...  
It warms our hearts to see her grow  
With pride and confidence, we know,  
That her tenacity and resolve  
Will see her through, for she is bold.  
Our fledgling who is bound to climb  
Will take her place – now is the time.

**Barbara Humphrey, Sennocke WI**

Shall we, maybe, where, when?  
Around and around, let's do it then  
30 years, same old neighbours, same old house  
Content, happy no need to grouse

....

But the garden! Too large to cope  
Husband complains, ready to mope  
Too hard to mow, we must go  
But where I cry? We love this so

....

Let's start the search and hope we find  
A new home that we won't mind  
Space to live and space to thrive  
Peace and quiet no need to strive

....

Seaside or countryside? Oh dear where to start  
Space for us and little dog with great big heart  
We'll miss the garden and the flowers  
But farewell to high-rise and the towers

....

Estate agents have shown us many places  
Even now we're undecided: all those different faces  
Perhaps rethink and maybe stay  
Pave the grass, pour a drink and wait another day

**Christina Davies, West Peckham WI**

Moving on from lockdown, well that made us all frown,  
Furlow a word not much used,  
But to those who worked, it gave a worry  
We were not amused,  
If you had a mortgage, payment could be deferred,  
But how to pay it back your thoughts and dreams  
Were stirred,  
This virus they called covid it had a lot to say,  
The elderly the sick they were the ones to pay,  
Our leader called Boris he was not much good,  
He could meet with friends,  
In groups of more than six they all stood,  
Every Thursday we clapped our heroes,  
The N.H.S they did their best,  
The nurses the docs all worked hard with zest,  
This thing called Covid is still here,  
But hopefully we're through the worst  
And now can feel some cheer,  
We have moved on from furlow, lockdown, and more,  
And can look to the future with much more in store,  
So thank God for us who all came through,  
Your dreams and wishes can still come true,  
For those families who were hit worst,  
Our thoughts are with you,  
Our hearts will burst,  
We pray for you and hope you move on,  
Our love and care will make you strong,  
Keep well, keep happy, keep moving on.  
**Christine Basden, Tenterden Glebe WI**

Walking down the aisle many years ago,  
Happy memories of family and friends.  
Building a home together  
Raising a family, working hard.  
Treading the pathway of child to adulthood.  
Full of smiles, fun and laughter, worry and concern.  
Happy memories created over the years.  
Tinged with sadness when faced with fears:  
The loss of beloved pets,  
The loss of friends taken too soon,  
The loss of aging parents.  
I find myself asking 'who am I now?'  
Happy memories to always remember,  
Time to move on through the next stages of life.  
Ready to seek new adventures.  
Because of my yesterdays, I can look forward to my tomorrows,  
Moving on...

**Clare Lewis, Boughton Monchelsea WI**

They said that time has long since passed  
And I should be moving on  
It broke my heart the day you died  
I still can't believe you've gone  
You were my strength and my best friend  
You said you'd never leave  
But you got sick, and then you died  
And I was left alone to grieve  
I know that we will meet again  
I still talk to you every day  
And in my head and in my heart  
I hear the words you say  
That you're still looking out for me  
I'm wrapped securely in your love  
You do your best to keep me safe  
While watching from above  
You taught me everything you could  
You tried to make me strong  
You said not to mourn because you've passed  
You want me moving on  
So I'll hold my head high as I go  
And fill my heart with song  
And yes, I'll do what you want me to  
I will – I'm moving on

**Diane English, Leamington Ladies WI**

Life changes in the blink of an eye  
You watch time, hours, minutes go by  
I lost my husband of fifty five years  
Can I go it alone, to face my fears  
Where do I go from here, I wish  
How do I start, move on from this  
Give up the presidency they said  
Thoughts are racing inside my head  
Am I able to face the world, alone and sad  
Will I move on from the good to the bad  
Time will heal, or so they say  
What do they know, who are they  
But wait, after time things start to heal  
A trip, a visit, some wine, a meal  
Is it you to ask who holds my hand  
No noise, no fanfare, no drums, no band  
My comfort blanket my great support  
The friends, the help, now who's have thought  
Moving on, of course with friends, I fly  
Their here, my amazing, wonderful WI  
**Jean Prestige-Jones, Harvel WI**

Wow! The millennium has arrived, it's the year 2000

How to move on from this, aches and pains still here

Seems I've to change my lifestyle, so I move on

Just been told, I've got an invisible illness, no cure

So, I move on.

Take this, take that, you need... so much, too much information – brain fog

But... I move on

Skip 25 years.

Taking drugs, I rattle. Test after test, it's no fun

Still no answers!

I need to move on, I want to move on.

But how?

**Joanna Woodhatch, Sutton Valence WI**

Sometimes lifes plans can simply go awry  
And moving on is difficult however hard we try.  
Kind friends and family will give you good advice  
But there no magic want to cure things in a trice  
Somehow life seems to have no reason or rhyme  
‘moving on’ is a process we have to give time  
Problems, joy and sorrow are all part of life.  
No one is immune from trouble or strife,  
But there’s always a rainbow and sunshine after rain  
You’ll wake up one morning and find your smiling again  
Try to stay positive and find a reason for fun,  
By moving on life’s battles can finally be won

**Joyce Honeysett, South Park WI**

Men, brown-coated, turned up to spend the day  
On loading tables beds and chairs and rugs  
Various possessions, crated china along with cutlery and mugs  
Its feeling very stressful since our choice to move away

Nothing must get left behind, piano, around which many songs were sang  
Gets draped with sheets to leave the home where echoes still remain  
Out from the hall and bedrooms where once family laughter came  
Now only grey lines show where much-loved photos used to hang

Memories, people, a lifetime of them one by one have left  
Often is the way that life moves on. That 'Moving Finger having Writ'  
Varying losses can mean todays communities may not be so close-knit  
I draw much tighter to those friends I have to feel a little less bereft

Now I must value what I have, retirement home, and those who've gone away, are  
Gone but not forgetting, yet what fills that empty family space?  
Of course! The chance to be so grateful in this new if smaller place  
Naturally my W.I. comes straight to mind! Because of course They Stay!

Many's the time I've felt so glad for that final move and coming here  
Often seeing so many neighbours friendly wave or smile! I've loved so far  
Various W.I.s happenings. Days out, Coffee Mornings, and by car  
Into community centres where excellent speakers fill my heart with cheer

No longer for those words "Moving On" My niche in life I've found  
Going about WI paperwork, Committee Meetings, all things to keep me busy  
Often I'll try the competitions, rhyming rhymes til my brain feels dizzy, but!  
Nice to be part of a warm-hearted group. May W.I ladies be FOREVER around!

**Judith Bishop from Allington Castle WI**

Seventy.

How did that happen?

Once life was so busy and hectic and full.

Juggling children and work. There was no time at all.

Now life goes more slowly. Still plenty to do.

With a party to plan, plus a meal out or two!

Soon I'll be marking three score years and ten.

So I've started to think – do I want them again?

No. it's been fun, but it's time to move on.

My life, yes I know now, is more than half done.

But move on to what, and move on to where?

Same house, same life, but with lots of grey hair.

The juggling is done, no more work, time to play.

Good times to plan for, enjoy every day.

I'll move on with a smile, for the years still to come

And look forward to friendships, adventures and fun.

**Lindsey Smith, Eden Park WI**

It was not very long ago  
When Sue wanted to have a go  
At something new,  
But .... What could she do?  
An idea came into her mind  
With photos that she then did find  
Through pages of an old art book  
That showed her a complete new look.  
She telephoned her favourite store  
But new appointments were no more,  
So off to a new place she espied  
And, before she could change her mind  
Into the chair, hair all wet  
Knowing that she was all set  
For colour, cut and then a perm  
Hoping against hope for lots of firm  
Wave after wave cascading down her neck  
Too late, too bad if she became a wreck  
But into the mirror she smiled  
I'm moving on, it's about time.

**Liz Crossingham, Downe WI**

Dear Susy  
I called, but in vain  
I had hoped to talk  
Dearest Sue  
I've been such a fool

Your coffee was cold  
Burnt toast filled the air  
Strewn lipstick and scarves  
Nothing new  
Just you

I'm leaving your key  
Your book, your comb  
Nothing else  
Just my love

Jim

**Liz Tapper, Frittenden WI**

Thirty years in the NHS!  
Retirement has come  
I will miss my patients  
But a new chapter has begun  
I feel anxious and worried  
What will I do to fill my time and start a new  
I look around to see, who needs me now?  
U3A? WI? Definitely a Committee to join here somehow  
Old friends to visit, places to see  
Charities to help, would they need me?  
And then there is Knole to be a guide to the rooms  
Certainly a myriad of decisions loom  
The people I meet along the way  
Need me differently to the patients in my bay  
I have a lot to give whomever I meet  
So step aside, step forward, retirement I greet!  
**Marilyn Davis, Chipstead WI**

Moving on can mean  
Leaving others behind  
A job, perhaps a journey  
Adventures to find  
There's excitement and sadness  
Do we want them to go?  
Change is not easy, so the answer is "No"  
But we have to let go,  
Smile, laugh and stay strong  
Somebody's life is moving on  
It's good for them to try things new  
They don't have to know what we go through  
So wave and clap and smile along  
For part of our life does involve "Moving On"

**Marion Crane, Bredhurst WI**

What IS “moving on”?  
Where have we been?  
Have we stopped, looked around?  
What have we seen?  
It's oft used in sadness,  
Bereavement and pain  
Relating to loved ones, we'll ne'er see again.  
But nothing stays static,  
We're encourage to move  
We keep the limbs supple  
Get out of the groove.  
So if it is hard to move on –  
That's okay  
But our loved ones would want us –  
To start a new day!

**Marion Crane, Bredhurst WI**

Life takes a turn, a chapter ends,  
But then a new one begins.  
What will it bring, what can I learn?  
New challenges to face, new games to win.

Exploring new groups, making new friends,  
Revisiting old haunts, getting out and about,  
Accepting new roles that opportunity sends,  
Appreciating that 'the more I put in, the more I get out!'

A time to champion change, a time to 'just be'  
To do my best to improve life for everybody.  
Volunteering, leading, supporting, all make me happy  
But seeing faces with smiles means much more to me.

A time to spend and share with friends and family,  
A time to enjoy and make more memories,  
A time now to do what **I** want for a while  
To be positive, to achieve those dreams, and above all to smile!

**Mary Dalman, Ravenswood WI**

Retired and older,  
I seem to get bolder!  
I pondered why this should be so.

A friend said to me  
“there’s going to be  
A new WI in Petts Wood – show we go?”

So that’s just what I did,  
All through Zoom and Covid,  
I have listened, watched others and now try....

To....

De-clutter my past  
And make tulip heads last  
Not to mention the crafts and that are ARTY!

I joined bridge and book groups  
And made earrings with hoops –  
Led the conga at our Christmas party!

So to everyone here:  
Join a new group this year.  
That’s ‘Moving On’ with the WI.

**Mary Plummer, Petts Wood Afternoon WI**

The war is over, we're Moving On  
The guns are silent but not for long,  
We're Moving On we hear them say –  
But wait, tomorrow is another day –  
Another place, another time –  
Man's anger has no rhyme.

Moving On, I fear not NO,  
Again we face another foe,  
Across the Glove the guns are heard,  
From East to West, we all observe.  
Why is war so bitter sweet?  
Win or lose, it's still defeat,  
It robs us all of peace and joy –  
Tossed around, just like a toy.

Loss is loss for either side,  
The end is not the end we sigh –  
A brave new world, we're Moving On,  
For that, the world has got wrong.

**Rosemary Chapman, Tenterden Glebe WI**

Please make of this as you wish and I am not a moaner!  
Two years ago I had an op and woke up with a Stoma!  
I learnt to cope with this and didn't throw in the towel  
Originally once alien to me I'm used to my new bowel!

I once thought it could be worse  
Though I'm sure I am not alone  
For advice I can contact the Stoma Nurse  
Who is always near the phone

Wining and dining now in moderation  
Up to now having only a staycation  
But that's all about to change it's ironic  
Make mine a double gin and tonic!

I've moved on now and I must say  
I'm carrying on walking straight and tall  
And making the most of every day  
Shortly flying to family in Oz long haul!

**Ruth Bignell, Sutton Valence WI**

Recently, at an airport  
I noticed a travelator.  
Watching, fascinated,  
As people got on, people got off,  
I thought  
Life is like that.  
You can't choose to get on,  
You can choose to get off.  
But not me!  
I will embrace the joy,  
Walk on into the unknown  
And keep moving on.

**Sue Noad, East Peckham WI**

who am I when I'm on my own?  
I'm no longer a wife, a sister, daughter  
I'm a fake. A fraud. Numb and devoid

Who am I when I'm on my own?  
I potter around the house, looking for inspiration  
Am I the books I read, the food I eat, clothes I wear?  
Do these blocks build a person, a life, a soul?

Who am I when I'm on my own?  
Can you honestly define yourself? Is that reflection in the mirror a lie?  
Are you merely the sum of the people around you?  
I think of all the people in terrible positions, situations not of their violation, and  
know that not be true.

Who am I when I'm on my own?  
I'm untethered. Unbound. Anxious and lost.  
These walls I built, protection, a waning.  
She is broken. She is damaged. Stay away. Beware.

Who am I when I'm on my own?  
I am a chef, singer, artist, engineer, plantsman.  
I am a dream, observer, planner fixer, explorer.  
I will be hope, joy, passion, laughter, love.

Who am I when I'm on my own?  
**Susan Swetman, Frindsbury Extra**