

Friends hope book will inspire women

By Jon Bennett

FOR MANY people literature, music and art are an indispensable source of support when times are hard. But the feeling of reassurance and belonging they get from reading a passage in a novel which relates to their own experience of life is often underestimated.

A new book published by two women, in collaboration with a group of their friends, seeks to guide this search for reassurance.

The hey nonny handbook, launched last week in Tunbridge Wells by journalist Janice Warman from Crowborough and teacher, designer and writer Julia Jeffries, from Fairwarp, is described as a "literary survival guide for women".

Its authors guide women of the "sandwich generation" – those looking after elderly parents and teenage children – toward authors and poets who prove they are not alone when the pressures of their lives start to take hold.

The "antithesis of a self-help book" as its authors describe it, was born of a group of friends who supported each other by sharing jokes, poems

and novels, and conceived in a walk over Ashdown Forest.

"It's about women, friendship and support. We feel literature is so much better than self-help," says Janice.

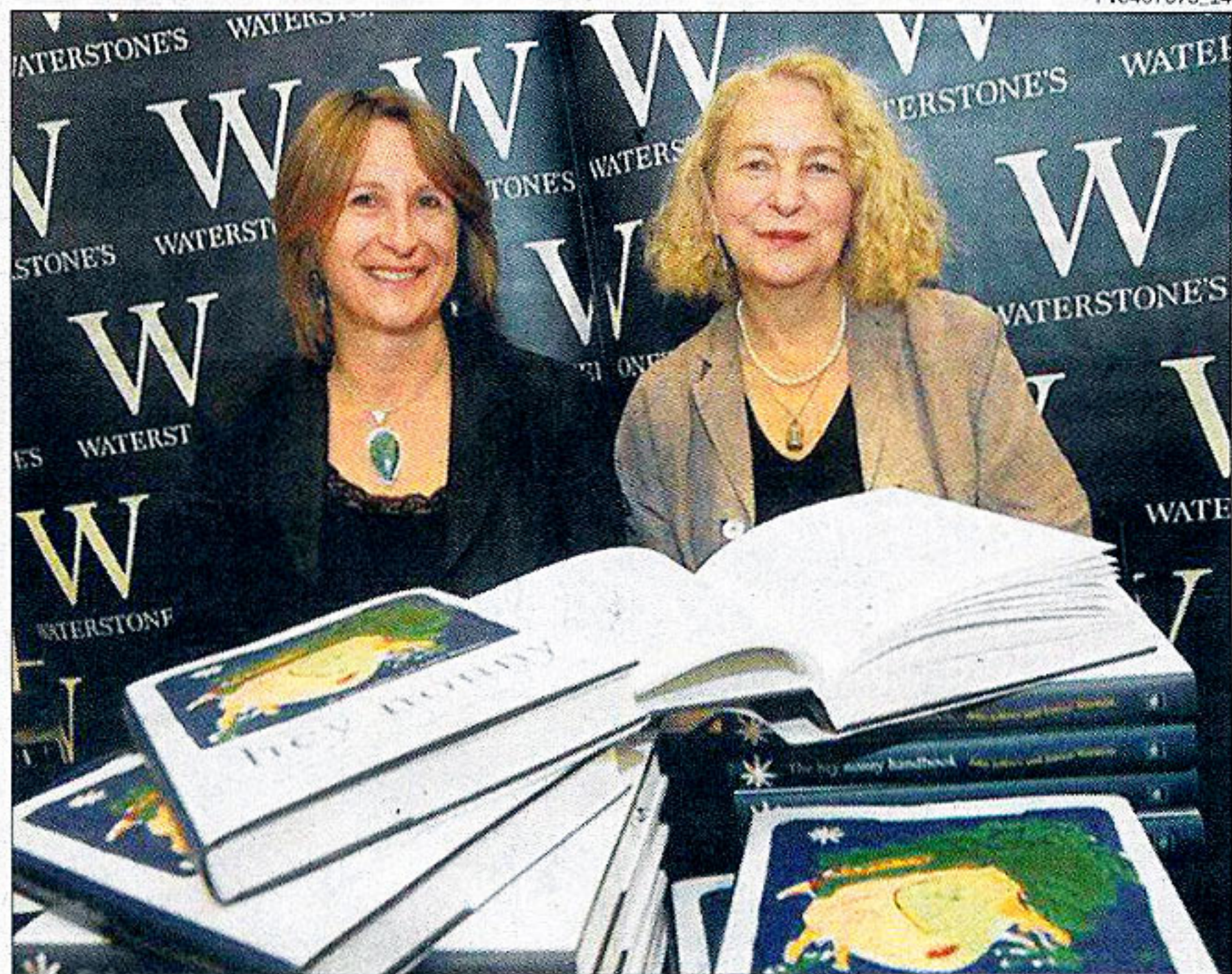
Julia says although the group were sharing literature in this way within a loose knit framework of friends "we wanted to make it accessible to women".

The two say the book is coming from almost 100 years of combined life experience and from two women who have hit rock bottom and bounced back and because of this they can address serious issues with a sense of humour and introduce others like them to a valuable source of support which is sitting on their bookshelves.

But the authors maintain, although it is aimed at women "of a certain age", there is much to be gained from the handbook by younger women too.

The book, which sold out at the launch and is being bought centrally by Waterstone's, meaning it will be distributed nationwide, is one of a planned series, the covers and concepts of which are already formed.

They hope women will find inspiration and strength in the hey nonny handbook.



LITERARY SURVIVAL: Janice Warman, left, and Julia Jeffries at the signing of their new book called the hey nonny handbook at Waterstone's in Tunbridge Wells