

Warwickshire WI News

ONLINE EDITION



Inside this issue:

Chair's Challenge for 2025

The WI Lottery

WFWI Online Book Group

And much more....



Chair's Message

Welcome to our Christmas edition of the magazine.



Thank you to all of you who joined us at the AFM (Annual Federation Meeting). We have had some lovely feedback, everyone loved Annabel Croft – who was so interesting to listen to. We were so pleased that the Lowland Rescue team members were able to join us at such short notice. Their work is so important and extensive, please remember them when you are looking for speakers or a local cause to support.

The new board of Trustees met last week, and we have some exciting things planned for the coming year. We are looking at a few new ideas which we hope will make non-members look at the WI in a different light, as well as some events that will inspire our current members. As Jeryl Stone, our National Chair said in her WI Life article, 'the WI is, and can be, a wonderful way to combat loneliness, so please remember to spread the word to those who might feel isolated'. Look at the new estates popping up all around Warwickshire as well as those outlying farms and hamlets when you are promoting your WI.

At the AFM I told you about the results of the Chair's Challenge. What an amazing and imaginative array of fund raising ideas you all had. We are going to collate the ideas and put them on the website to inspire you all. The challenge for the next year is to show off your area. More details to be found later in the magazine.

In the meantime, enjoy all your WI events over the Festive period, we look forward to seeing some of you at our upcoming events.

On behalf of the WFWI Trustees best wishes for Christmas and a very happy and successful New Year.

Sue

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Cover Picture:
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Editors' Column

Welcome to our fourth and final online edition for 2024. This year has flown by!

Huge thanks to you all for submitting your interesting news and photos. We thoroughly enjoy receiving them. Please do keep this up!

To help you get your articles ready in time, below is the schedule for both the digital and magazine editions for 2025:

DIGITAL February/March Latest date to send to E: editor@wfw.co.uk	30 January
MAGAZINE April Latest date to send to E: editor@wfw.co.uk	17 February
DIGITAL May/June Latest date to send to E: editor@wfw.co.uk	28 April
MAGAZINE July Latest date to send to E: editor@wfw.co.uk	15 May
DIGITAL August/September Latest date to send to E: editor@wfw.co.uk	24 July
MAGAZINE October Latest date to send to E: editor@wfw.co.uk	21 August
DIGITAL November/December Latest date to send to E: editor@wfw.co.uk	27 October

Don't forget to **order your printed copy** of the Warwickshire WI News. At only £2.50 for the year for four copies, it really is great value. Your WI Secretary/Treasurer has the order form so please ask them to order your copy.

Finally, we would like to give a warm welcome to Jane Allen (member of Fillongley Lite and Nuneaton Acorns, and newly appointed Warwickshire Trustee) who has recently joined our Editorial Team.

May we take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas!

Jingle Holly!

Jane Allen, Anita Dudley, Trish Handsley
Editorial Team
editor@wfw.co.uk

IFE Column

Many WIs hold their Annual Meeting in October or November. Your accounts will have been examined before your meeting. A copy of your Financial Statement, all 4 pages, signed by your President, Treasurer, and the Financial Examiner, should be sent into the Federation Office along with your Annual Report form. It is important that you send in your Financial Statement in order that a copy can be retained at Federation House in your WI's records.

Gillian Henson
IFE Vice Chair

Treasurer's Corner

These dark nights may seem long – but you can still have fun and for free.

How? Well, apart from meeting your WI friends at your meetings of course, you can read this newsletter and WI Life and be inspired by member stories from across the county and around the country. You can learn something new from the Learning Hub – there's something for everyone there (craft, languages, business training, history, literature, travel... go on, take a look). Most courses are entirely free to members as the £5 charge gets removed at checkout. And there's MyWI with great craft projects for you to complete. It also has lots of information on how you can get involved in our campaigns, even from your armchair by the fire!

If you know a woman who's looking for something to do these winter nights, why not encourage her to join the WI? There's a world of friendship and opportunity just waiting for her...

Sue Gill
WFWI Treasurer
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susan.j.gill@gmail.com

WI Learning Hub - [Link](#)
My WI - [Link](#)

REMINDER



Warwickshire Federation **'What's on and events calendar'** is updated regularly and has a host of events available for Members (and guests if stipulated) to book and take part in throughout the year. Covering all sorts of topics including Serious Science, Craft, Poetry, Days Out, Shopping Trips, Training, Quizzes and Competitions - to name but a few! All events are listed and available to book (via Ticketsource) on the Warwickshire Federation website [here](#).

Why not check it out?

Also, please don't forget afterwards to send in your photos and a few words on an event you have attended!



Public Affairs Sub-Committee News

CAN WE HELP TO CLOSE THE EQUAL PAY GAP BY INVESTING?

In 2023 women in full time work were paid 14% less than men, and are less likely to invest their money for the future. So, whilst the pay gap is extremely disappointing and at this point might be beyond individual control, investing should not be. Here's a few facts:

Twice as many men aged under 35 hold Stocks and Shares ISAs compared with women of the same age. Women tend to prefer savings accounts but women who do choose to invest often adopt strategies that could make them successful investors. Men tend to invest in a more ad-hoc fashion, adding payments at irregular intervals, while women are more likely to set up a direct debit. This means they benefit from regular drip-feeding money into the market, getting more units for their money when markets are high, or fewer when markets are low. Men invest £599 billion more than women in the UK, according to the comparison website Boring Money. The gender investment gap affects retirement too. Women retire with an average of £69,000 saved in their pension, while for men, the typical pension pot is worth £205,800, according to the pension provider Now Pensions.

So, come on ladies, let's do something for ourselves, be independent and turn the tables, get investing.

We know that women invest less, not only because of the pay gap but also because of having a child, the pink tax (goods aimed at women are often more expensive pro-rata), menopause, divorce and caring for the elderly.

It's a case of change what you can and accept what you can't. There's lots of information available, so do your research, maybe consider:

If you've chosen a career path that isn't rewarded well financially, it's hard to change something that is systemic. And if you find as time goes by that your financial well-being is more important than your career of choice, think about retraining. You could be working for 50 years or so.

Research your industry salaries. And if you feel you're not being paid fairly, open a conversation with your employer. See if there are steps you can take to close that gap.

If you can't beat 'em, budget and save for your future. Saving a little and often can help increase your financial confidence. Researching Stocks and Shares ISAs and Self Invested Pension Plans, can help you save tax efficiently.

Go on, get investing, you can do it.

CLEAN RIVERS NOW

**WI Week of River Action
16 - 22 September 2024**

During this week of action the public affairs sub committee of WFWI supported the national campaign for clean rivers for people and wildlife, hosting two outdoor events together with an information campaign at the public library in Leamington Spa.



On Wednesday a silent protest took place outside Coventry rail station, where members carried placards with the message "Clean Rivers Not Dividends". We made a "river bed" out of recycled netting to lie down on to attract the attention of the public passing by, and handed out leaflets detailing how water companies have paid out billions of pounds in dividends over the last 32 years but failed to update infrastructure whilst still incurring massive debts.

We were supported by our very own National Chair, Jeryl Stone, our Warwickshire Chair, Sue Postlewaite and even two members who had travelled from the West Midlands federation.

On Saturday, we held an "underwater" themed picnic in Bancroft Gardens, Stratford upon Avon, where we were so lucky with the weather, only getting drizzled on and not downright soaked! The town was very busy that day, so we were fortunate enough to have a lot of passers by taking interest and asking us about our campaign, plus we were joined by Susan Juned, a fellow WI member and leader of Stratford upon Avon District Council and Manuela Perteghella, a dedicated climate and clean rivers Liberal Democrat MP for Stratford upon Avon.

It was hard work, but fun and I hope we got the message about the need for clean water for all to a wide audience. Many thanks to all who helped and joined in.



**Anne Bloxham
Public Affairs**

Speakers' Spotlight

Rugby Food Bank (Trussell organisation)

Hillmorton Paddock WI welcomed a representative of the **Rugby Food Bank (Trussell organisation)** recently who gave a most interesting and informative talk/slide presentation about the service. He mentioned how Food Banks came about and of the increasing need for them today, he also spoke about who is eligible and how people apply. We were informed that there is an increasing need for the service and each bag used to carry food supplies away costs 30p with many families needing five bags to take their food home.



Meryl Gregory, a very capable sewer, considered this fact and approached the WI's Craft and Chat group with the suggestion that we might make shopping bags from old curtains and duvet covers. A number of members readily supplied these and the next couple of monthly meetings were devoted to this task and resulted in Meryl Gregory presenting the Food Bank with 36 beautifully crafted bags in a variety of sizes and designs. We were delighted to recycle unwanted items in addition to assisting this valuable organisation. Something we hope to repeat later in the year.

As a token of our appreciation, the speaker was given a donation and all members contributed to a collection of food items which was most gratefully received by our speaker.

Jose Royle

Fused Glass Workshop - Newbold Pacey & Ashorne WI

For our July meeting we welcomed Rachel from Crafty Business who led us in a fused glass workshop to create our own hanging ornament or tealight.

First Rachel explained a little about the process of fusing glass, the base that you work on, the size, shape and type of glass you use for the pattern and the different firing methods that achieve different results.

She provided us with a glass base plate and a great selection of pre-cut glass and washed sea glass in all shapes, sizes and colours and helped us with our design ideas.

There was a great buzz in the room as everyone started sketching out designs, rummaged in Rachels boxes of glass jewels and tried to bring forth their creative side. By the end of the evening everyone had made something beautiful and unique aided of course by plentiful supplies of tea and cake.

Rachel carefully labelled each of our creations and took them away to fire in her kiln. Our secretary Jackie collected the items two weeks later and we were all delighted and amazed at the results.

Rachel runs a variety of workshops for adults and children and has worked with many WIs in Warwickshire. She is based in Arley, north Warwickshire.

Take a look on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for more information.



The WI Lottery



Launched on WI Day the 16th September, to support all tiers of the organisation: the National Federation of Women's Institutes, regional federations and local WIs - the WI Lottery operates on the principle of raising money within the community for the community. We empower local good causes to raise money in a fun and effective way.

A ticket for The WI Lottery costs £1 a week and 60p will go directly to good causes!

To find out more click [here](#)

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Leisure Activities Sub-Committee

Leisure Activities would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and hope to see you in 2025 at some of our events.



The 2024 Darts competition was won by Stockton Team 2.



Runners up were Wishaw.

Our Annual Treasure Hunt was held in July in Shipston-on-Stour. We were fortunate to have lovely weather, and all the Ladies and guests had fun looking for all the clues. The winner was Yvonne from Wishaw WI and she was presented her certificate at our Annual Federation Meeting by our NFWI Chair Jeryl Stone and the wonderful speaker Annabel Croft.

Also in July, we took a coach trip to Bridgnorth to spend the morning and then onto David Austin Roses. To see the number of roses on display in all their gardens was wonderful.



Thank you to all the teams who took part and look out for next year's application forms for the 2025 Tournament.

Over the last 12 months we visited Nottingham Christmas Market where members and their guests were able to do their Christmas Shopping then in February, Julia Baker from our LA Committee gave us a fabulous cookery demonstration taking all the recipes from our own federation cookbook, Kitchen Wisdom giving us the opportunity to taste the wonderful food. Inspiring us to give the recipes a try.

In April we held a Scrabble competition. Why don't you come and join us for the next one at Federation House on Wednesday 22nd January at 10.30 am.

A wonderful Chutney Demonstration was given by a WI show Judge, Nancy Hawksworth who is a winning preserves maker. She explained what the difference was between Salsas, Relishes and Chutneys and also answered questions getting us ready for our own Chutney making in the Autumn. From this we are holding a Chutney, Jam and Marmalade competition on Wednesday 26th February, so get cooking.

We are looking for new members to join our friendly team...



The Leisure Activities Committee is made up of Federation Trustees and WI members. We meet alternate months to discuss and plan trips and workshops and sporting activities. We are looking for new members to join our friendly team.

Anyone interested would be most welcome to observe at one of our meetings. For further information contact Glynis Forknall:

forkins01@yahoo.co.uk

Please let us know what you enjoy so that we can help you to achieve it. Even better, why not join our committee to make your own input?

There is more to a needle museum than meets the eye...



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Chair's Challenge for 2025 – The Best of your Area

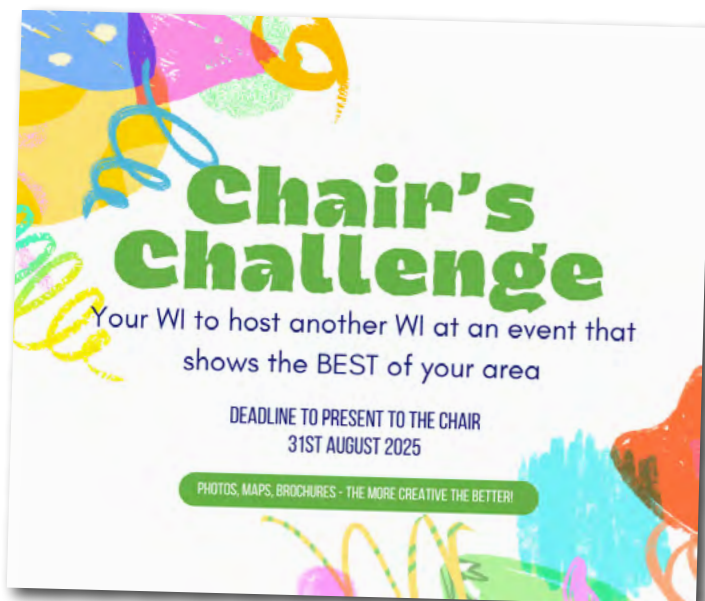
The challenge for the coming year is for your WI to host another WI either virtually or in person at an event that shows the best of your area.

The event can take any form you like; a walk, a talk, a treasure hunt or anything else you can think of to show your visitors the best of the area around where your WI meets. It can include food; a lunch or an afternoon tea, but the event should cost no more than £12.50 per person.

Your event is to be presented to the Chair by 31st August 2025. Your presentation can include photos, maps, brochures etc. The more creative the better. It must include your budget.

The submission will be displayed as hard copies at the AFM 2025 in whatever format you choose.

The judging will take into account : the printed literature (booklet, poster etc) provided to a prospective visiting WI, design, originality of ideas and the budget.



If you do run a real event, in order to get your photos etc, any profits made by the WI to be retained by the WI.

Have fun putting this together and celebrate your surroundings.

Hatton

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Not Just a Garden Centre

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Hattonworld.com

Members News



WI Podcast now live!

The Anchor Group, a vibrant and dynamic network of nine local WIs in the Nuneaton, Bedworth and surrounding area, have embarked on an exciting project by launching their very own podcast - **The WI Diaries**.

Only made possible by applying for and securing funding through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this enabled the group to purchase all the necessary podcast recording equipment and will offer a unique audio platform capturing the oral history of the WI. The podcast episodes will be used to share the stories, capture events and activities, WI member history, and wider activities of WI members! It will celebrate and promote our rich heritage and contributions to the wider community.

The WI Diaries went live on 'Spotify' (a digital music, podcast and video service) on Thursday 10th October. Please feel free to head over there to give The WI Diaries a listen and catch up on the latest episodes. You will be able to follow the page and will also hopefully wish to share with others!

The **WI Diaries** podcast can be found [here](#)



The Anchor Group

Bidford on Avon Group Report

We all know the difference a dog can make to our lives but for some people dogs can actually make life possible. The charity 'Dogs for Good' make a huge difference to the lives of people living with disabilities by providing expertly trained dogs. Bidford on Avon WI learnt all about the amazing work this charity does at their September meeting.



Left to right: Marilyn and dog Ash, Anne Prosser – from Dogs for Good

Ann Prosser from 'Dogs for Good' gave a very informative talk on how the expertly trained dogs support both adults and children living with a range of disabilities including autism and dementia. The dogs from the Banbury based charity provide practical based support to adults and children living with disabilities by helping with getting dressed, undressed, opening and closing doors, even with putting rubbish in the bin! Not only this, but the independence and confidence the dogs provide can completely change the life of not only the individual but the whole family. Autism assistance dogs completely transform the lives of families affected by autism. The talk explained how the dogs assist with keeping children living with autism by creating a safe environment and having a calming effect on the child helping to reduce stress and anxiety in unfamiliar surroundings.

Ann was joined by one of the socialisers, Marilyn and her dog Ash, who explained how confident and sociable puppies are selected from the litters produced from their breeding programme. Usually labradors and golden retrievers, their training begins with initially learning their name and how to sit and lie down on command at only a few months old. This is done at home with their socialiser who cares for the puppy before they go to the training centre at around 18 months old. Here the trainers teach the carefully matched dogs all the skills they will need to help transform the lives of people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, they are unable to provide dogs for all the applications they receive but have helped around 70 families with assistance dogs this year. They also provide support by running community dog sessions and family dog workshops. If, like the Bidford WI, you are wondering how you can help this charity to help more families, you could become a socialiser and look after a puppy in their first months before going to the training centre, fundraise or donate at www.dogsforgood.org.

Jodie Kirby

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Members News

Dosthill WI

Recently Dosthill WI has been busy.

Our local park, 'The Broom', was judged in July by the RHS Britain in Bloom under the category of 'It's Your Neighbourhood'. The presentation evening in September was a great success with three of our WI ladies picking up a level 5 'outstanding' judgement certificate. They thank all the community members who were involved in making this year's judging a success.



Pictured from left: Linda Gill, Suzanne Hollis and Beverley Lander.

September saw the Heritage day in Tamworth. Dosthill WI supported the event with a stall in St. Edith's Church. We handed out our programmes, displayed some photos from our last 80 years and sold cakes and crafts.



We were lucky to meet the Lady High Sheriff of Staffordshire. It was a great day to meet up with friends and network with new contacts. Such a fun day.



Left to right: Chris Jones, Jan Purdham, Lady High Sheriff of Staffordshire, Beverley Lander and Linda Gill.

Chris Jones, Dosthill WI

Bidford on Avon WI

Somewhere Different? Try 'The Good Life'

Somewhere different, were the words spoken from someone on the Bidford WI Committee. We need to do something that we have not experienced before. We have done afternoon teas, gardens, city visits, seaside, etc. Everyone nodding in agreement - "yes, but where?" - we all said.

So eventually this week we decided we do something 'fun' and also 'educational' right on our doorstep in Warwickshire. We all bundled into a coach and made our way to Millholme Parc Farm. A rural beautiful small holding owned and run by Cymbre and John Baseley deep in the Warwickshire countryside.

We also invited along our friends and colleagues from Long Marston WI to join us. This was no ordinary Farm Visit, this was a more 'Tom and Barbara' outing, for those that remember 'The Good Life' on TV. Cymbre and her husband care for all their animals ensuring that they have the best welfare and healthy life, and it was easy to see how exceedingly well looked after they were. All the animals had names and as we viewed, fed and stroked them, Cymbre would introduce them to us, just as you would a close family member.

We were given a most informative talk and tour of the farm. We saw all the different breeds of sheep, cattle and the most enormous pig I think anyone has ever seen! Along with a family of super-cute rabbits living in the Barn, 'Fluff' was pure white and was eager to be stroked and petted; they had the noisiest Cockerels and hens, and three Sheep Dogs, whom unfortunately we did not get to meet on the night, partly as we had



taken over the Barn for our BBQ Feasting. We had a fantastic meal of tasty mouth-watering beef and sausages, cooked by John, again all the organic produce coming from Cymbre's animals. Cymbre is a lady who believes in animal welfare and sustainability and uses her many talents to craft the wool and other items from her animals into gifts and other items. Needless to say, some crafting gift items were snapped up and her beef, sausages and eggs were a sell out on the night. This was truly an outing, with a difference, that we all enjoyed. And we concluded that it was certainly a step away from our normal outings.

Jodie Kirby
Publicity & Social Media Coordinator
Bidford on Avon WI

Members News

Earlsdon WI

It was with great anticipation that the Earlsdon Women's Institute welcomed along to their Open meeting in September, the former West End singer, Dave Willetts. Nearly 100 members and guests enjoyed an evening of entertainment where Dave told of how he first entered into a stage career, following years as an engineer. Stories about his years in the West End were entertaining and funny whilst his current work focuses on one of the darker aspects of growing old, dementia.



Having volunteered to run the Coventry Singing for the Brain group, for the Alzheimer's Society, which he does twice a month at the Queens Road Baptist Church, Coventry. He went on to create the Dave Willetts Foundation to help those living with dementia. This debilitating disease not only affects the individual concerned, but it is like a pebble in a pond and the ripples spread to incorporate all family and friends. He has personal experience of this having seen own members of his family suffer.

This has led him to write a stage play about dementia, The Wednesday Night Club, which will debut at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre in 2025. Mr Willetts was particularly proud to announce this as the Belgrade Theatre played a big part in his early career. Although the play's main focus is on dementia the story is about 4 couples and how it affects them. He says it's not all doom and gloom and hopes that people will laugh, maybe cry but hopefully sing along.

He had the crowd on the night singing and clapping along and played one of the songs from his new show. It was a noisy, happy and fun evening for everyone - tinged with the sadness that comes from a condition that can be so debilitating.

Gail Chick
Treasurer, Earlsdon WI

Grandborough WI

Grandborough WI hosted their Macmillan coffee morning on Friday 20th September. We were thrilled to be so well supported by members, their friends and family and of course our lovely village neighbours. We raised the grand total of £339.92.



Committee members, left to right - Kathy, Heather, Elise, Michelle, Julia, Tracey and Kim

All of the beautiful crafts were made by our newest member Shirley who kindly donated all proceeds to Macmillan.



Fillongley Lite WI

For our August members meeting we had the pleasure of an informative wine tasting evening, including a short tour at Blabers Hall Wine Estate, a vineyard in rural Fillongley.

Proudly growing quality grapes to produce fine English Wines that are all Vegan and Vegetarian with a strong sustainable outlook. A fun evening was had by all, and Blabers Hall Wine Estate is highly recommended for a visit.



Jane Allen
President of Fillongley Lite WI



Members News

Hampton Lucy and Charlecote WI

For many WIs, the thought of promotions to attract new members can be daunting. Here at Hampton Lucy and Charlecote WI, we decided to raise our profile by embarking on a new promotions campaign and I volunteered to take on the challenge which was agreed. One of our newer members; Tass, offered us the opportunity to attend an upcoming event she was involved in organising called "On your Doorstep" on 5th October in Hampton Lucy Village Hall. We quickly accepted and set to work! The following day I approached Charlecote Water Mill and arranged to meet the Miller, Karl, along with Elaine who oversees our craft group. Karl's last open day of this year was to be on October 13th and we were determined to be involved, and happy to report we achieved success!

We quickly realised that apart from bunting, a monthly article in our local Grapevine publication, and our social media posts we had nothing of any scale to use. I had watched with interest everything happening around the Anchor Group of WIs in WFWI for months, it was time I approached my friend and one of their members Marina Kitchen of Nuneaton Acorns WI. We chatted through ideas, and I designed and painted our new Logo late the following Friday evening and sent it across to Marina. We set about designing a Banner and Promotional Bookmarks. It is surprising how the hours passed so quickly, but our design was born. It was submitted to the printers and the nervous wait began.

The banner was finally unveiled 5 days later at the WFWI Annual Meeting to smiles all around. Our members loved it along with the bookmarks and were excited to see them used two days later October 5th!

I thoroughly recommend any WI getting involved with community events within your local area to meet the local public. If you don't have one, then go ahead and organise one.

Never try to second guess what future members want, just ask them! Encourage coming with friends and assure them that all members will



Left to right: Yvette Hunt, Marilyn Swinburne, Kath Clarke, Margaret Buckingham, Jeryl Stone, Marina Kitchen

make them feel welcome. Social media certainly has a place today but as people we still enjoy the human contact.

Taking the time to look around your area for local attractions paid off for us as a wonderful relationship has been forged between ourselves and our local flour Miller, Karl.

I was very privileged to be joined by Jeryl, one of our members who also agreed to be with me all day. As Jeryl is the National Chair, it was wonderful for all to see her as a local, hardworking and hands on member too. Visitors to our stall were thrilled to meet her! We handed out promotional bookmarks, taking contact details of ladies interested in joining us, which we followed up after. Suggesting ways for those visitors from areas of the country to get in touch with their local federations is equally as important whilst of course promoting the ever-important online Learning Hub. We found everyone was interested in the Hub even if they were not sure they wanted to join. Remember to sow those seeds - from the online Hub new members will also grow!

Yvette Hunt
Vice President and Promotions co-ordinator
Hampton Lucy and Charlecote WI



Left to right: Elaine List, Jayne Tutt, Jeryl Stone.



Members News

Mancetter (Manduessedum) WI

Mancetter WI decided to keep their August visit local and support Roman Mancetter, an Exhibition in St Peter's Church, Mancetter. Members enjoyed a luxury salad supper followed by delicious puddings from Angie Spencer a local Caterer.

Members were given a detailed talk with screen pictures by Martin Saunders, Chair of Roman Mancetter Group, outlining the Roman Fort from AD43 and the most likely site of the AD61 Battle of Watling Street between Boudica's Iceni and other Celtic tribes and Paulinus's XIV Legio Gemina, focusing on The Latin, The Land and The Logistics situated around Mancetter.

Another talk followed by Eddie Smallwood, local historian, explaining and demonstrating the superior armour and weaponry used by the Romans against the wild naked tattooed Celts! Members didn't get away lightly as they were placed into marching formation and put through a drill - enjoyed by all!

The evening was rounded off with a visit to the actual Roman Exhibition situated in Mancetter Church where members saw a detailed model reconstructing the Battle of Watling Street and viewing finds of coins, pottery and other artifacts found in the area around the Mancetter fort.

An informative and very enjoyable visit.

Mandy Coult



Left to right:
Pat Wileman,
Jean Thorpe,
Brenda Evans,
Michelle
Quarcoopome,
Margaret Taylor

Rugby Group Garden Party

The day started overcast with the threat of rain in the air as committee members from both Hillmorton Paddock and Deering Regent Daytime WIs started setting up plant, craft, book, preserve and other stalls in preparation for the Rugby Women's Institute Group Garden Party. In addition, there was also a raffle, tombola and a count the sweets stall.

The kitchen in the bungalow was set for tea with a wide variety of cakes and scones contributed by members. Alison was on the gate as numerous members, friends and families attended, enjoying refreshments and chatting whilst the sun shone brightly over the lovely setting. In all a very successful afternoon which will in due course will benefit two charities.



Shipston WI

Shipston WI had a great day at Braille's Show with their Human Fruit Machine, beautifully decorated with hand made fruit by one of our members. To the sound of Kazoos, the ladies would produce random pieces of fruit from the holes in the boxes! Three the same won a prize. Great fun and a good fundraiser.

Bridget Smith
President



Members News

Studley Priory WI

What a busy, crazy year Studley Priory WI have had! We invite our members to join in a wide variety of events. Ensuring that everyone is given the warmest of welcomes in a secure, safe space, and can leave their worries at the door for a short period of time.

Our favourite things. . . .

*Friend making, cake baking, walking & laughing
Book clubs and gin cruises, crafting and bowling
Celebrating milestones, honouring our dead*

These are a few things our WI did!



Gail Smith
President of Studley Priory WI



*Left to right:
Jane Drake,
Pauline Burbery,
Jane Lytton,
Ruth Lowe,
Jenny Adcock
and Joy Cooper*

Celebrations Warwick WI

This year Warwick WI celebrated the 50th anniversary of its first meeting which had been held in September 1974.

Sadly we no longer have any of our founder members, but we do have several who have been with us for over 40 years.

We've added a number of fun and different things to the year's programme, including a photo shoot of Fifty Handbags. Makes a change from photographing our members though we have done that as well. A special outing to Broughton Castle and Broughton Grange Gardens in June was very enjoyable and the weather was perfect.

The highlight of the year was a party at our September meeting. Margaret from Milverton Folk Dance Club brought music and a good voice to organise us through an hour or so of country dancing. Members also brought photographs of themselves 50 years ago! Guests of Honour were Dave Skinner, Mayor of Warwick and Anne Bloxham our Federation Trustee. After some energetic dancing we adjourned to the Church Hall for a well deserved buffet supper and our birthday cake.



A good time was had by all, and we are looking forward to the next 50 years.

Rosemary Way
Programme
Secretary
Warwick WI

Wishaw WI

The Wishaw Women's Institute (WI) Striders and Strollers group enjoyed a delightful day out in Birmingham City Centre this week, embarking on a 5km mystery walk filled with history, cryptic clues, and camaraderie.

The walk, which was specially ordered as a Mystery Tour by one of the group's enthusiastic members, took participants on a fascinating journey through the city's rich heritage. To top it off, the weather was "specially ordered" too, providing perfect sunny conditions for a day of exploration and discovery.

Over the course of the morning, the group tackled a series of challenging clues, uncovering hidden stories and surprising facts about Birmingham's past. Among the most intriguing revelations was that renowned author Charles Dickens delivered his first public speech at Birmingham Town Hall, a titbit that left many walkers marvelling at the city's vibrant cultural history.

"We walked around parts of Birmingham we thought we knew well, but this tour really opened our eyes to the stories we had no idea about," said one participant. "It was such a unique way to learn about our city."

After an invigorating morning of walking and mystery-solving, the group wrapped up their adventure with a well-deserved lunch at the Old Joint Stock on Temple Row, a historic pub known for its stunning architecture and cozy atmosphere. And another fact learnt was that the Old Joint Stock was originally a library for the cathedral before becoming a bank. It only became a pub in 1997. The meal provided the perfect opportunity for everyone to relax, share their thoughts on the tour, and enjoy some delicious food in good company.

The Wishaw WI Striders and Strollers group highly recommends the Mystery Tour to other WIs looking for a fun and engaging day out. "It's a fantastic way to bond with friends, get some exercise, and learn something new along the way," said one walker. "We're already looking forward to our next adventure!"

For anyone inspired to follow in their footsteps, the group suggests exploring this or similar tours whether it's for the historical insights, the exercise, or simply the joy of discovering Birmingham's hidden gems.



Alison Ellmann
Wishaw WI

WFWI Bookworms



SEPTEMBER 2024 UPDATE

It was lovely to see everyone after the summer break, some of our number even managed to join us from their holidays in distant places. We were delighted to meet Trudy's handsome black rescue cat, Rocco, when he settled himself on her laptop keyboard!

We welcomed our newest Book Worms - Mary Mooney (Curdworth WI) and Elise Oliver (Grandborough WI) and then went on to review our summer read, 'La Vie' by John Lewis Stempel described thus by *The Times*:

'A charming account of how a farmer swapped Herefordshire for a life in rural France... Readers of his many books and his Times nature columns will know how easily Lewis-Stempel's writing marries the lyrical with the descriptive... And his capacity for wonder never flags.'

This book split the vote somewhat:

Those in favour appreciated the lyrical descriptions of the passing of the seasons, flora and fauna, birds and the rural French way of life, feeling it was a realistic description of the long hours of toil required for even partial self-sufficiency. We were glad that the author did not try to sell an idyllic lifestyle or patronise the locals like some of the 'my life in...' books have done. We enjoyed his candour about speeding fines and the threat of being limited to a 'voiture sans permis' - a tiny car with a very small engine that anyone over 14 can drive! We also picked up a great recipe for a walnut cake which has been shared.



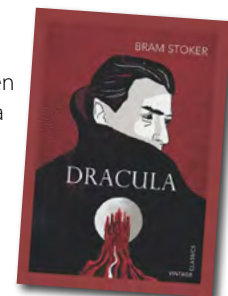
In the other camp were those for whom it was just not their type of book. They were bored by the flowery descriptions and skim-read to find the action. Not a great read for those uninterested in French lifestyle or recipes. For members listening on Audible, many of the recipes, poems and some descriptions were read in French - tricky if you do not have any French language yourself. But we all applauded his year of toil.

Overall, we scored it 6.5 out of a possible 10.

Although she had not particularly enjoyed this book, Sue J had read another by J L Stempel that she highly recommended. 'The Wood' about

Cockshutt Wood in Herefordshire tells the story of English woodlands as they change with the seasons. Lyrical and informative, steeped in poetry and folklore.

For our next read, we agreed to go for a classic, 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker to get us through Halloween and Guy Fawkes night! Sue J is currently in Romania and has just visited Transylvania, specifically Bran Castle (home of Dracula) so we look forward to hearing all about it at our next get together.



The book is described thus on Good Reads:

'Dracula is an 1897 Gothic horror novel by Irish author Bram Stoker. It introduced the character of Count Dracula, and established many conventions of subsequent vampire fantasy. The novel tells the story of Dracula's attempt to move from Transylvania to England so that he may find new blood and spread the undead curse, and of the battle between Dracula and a small group of men and a woman led by Professor Abraham Van Helsing.'

Dracula has been assigned to many literary genres including vampire literature, horror fiction, the gothic novel, and invasion literature. The novel has spawned numerous theatrical, film, and television interpretations.' And it's currently available on Kindle for 23p.

In early August some members of this group met for a lunch, chat and a look around the little bookshop at 'Nel's at the Pavilion' in Lighthorne, near Gaydon. The next lunch and book browsing meeting is set for mid-October at Astley Book Farm, Bedworth CV12 0NE. Everyone welcome.

Next meeting is set for **7:30pm Tuesday 26 November on Zoom.**

A reminder and the Zoom log-in will be sent a few days before the meeting. If you would like to join us, please register on Ticketsource, or contact the office and you will be put on the list to receive the zoom link for the next meeting.

Enjoy curling up with some Autumn reading.

Trish Handsley & Ruth McCartney
WFWI Book Worms co-ordinators
Warwickshire WIs

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