

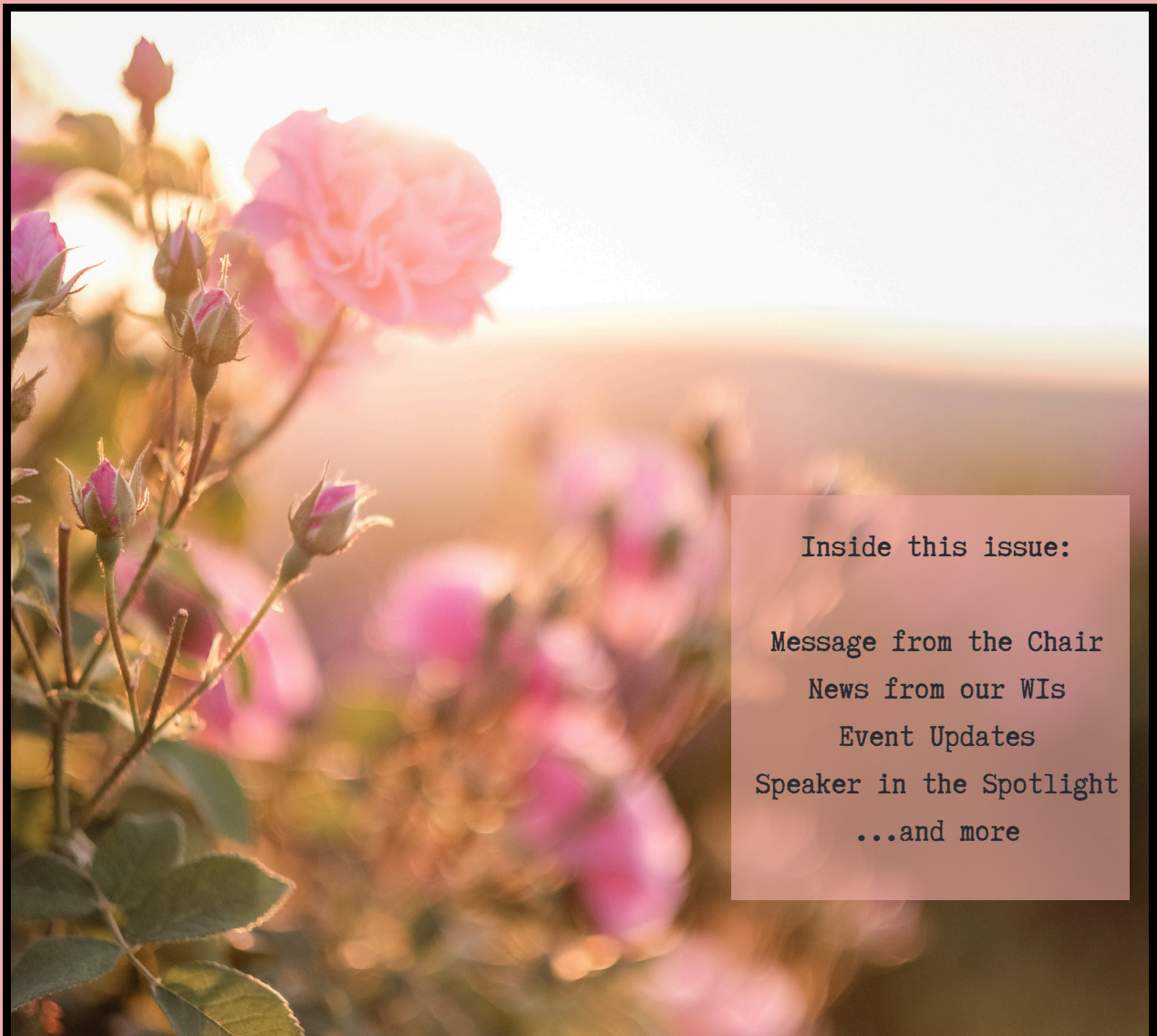


Federation of Women's Institutes  
**WARWICKSHIRE**  
Inspiring Women Since 1918

**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN

# Warwickshire WI News DIGITAL

August/September 2026



Inside this issue:

Message from the Chair

News from our WIs

Event Updates

Speaker in the Spotlight

...and more

**FREE**



# Message from the Chair



It is as warm as ever as I write this, and I was thinking that it hardly seems like a British summer when you can confidently plan an outdoor event without worrying that it might be rained off. WIs across the county are holding some wonderful summer get-togethers for their members, with many also taking the opportunity to raise funds in ingenious ways for local charities.

Thank you to those WIs who have already sent donations to the Esther Project. They have been overwhelmed by the generosity shown by everyone. If your WI has been collecting, please don't forget that a scrapbook, or similar item, containing photographs and details of the total raised should be sent to Federation House by the end of August. These will be judged as part of the Chair's Challenge, with awards being presented at the Federation Meeting at Stoneleigh in October.

There are lots of exciting events coming up this autumn, so do keep an eye on the mailings, newsletters and this magazine for all the latest information.

Our online Annual Meeting will provide an overview of how your Federation funds are being used, and we would encourage every WI to ensure that at least one member attends.

The Federation Meeting, in its new format, promises to be an enjoyable day with additional speakers and shopping opportunities. It will certainly be well worth attending, and details of tickets and speakers are being released now.

We are also planning another Federation Weekend, and those who book early will be able to take advantage of an excellent early bird offer.

So, however you choose to spend the rest of this lovely warm summer, I hope you have the opportunity to relax, enjoy yourselves, and return refreshed for what promises to be a busy and exciting autumn.

**Best wishes, Ruth**

| MEMORIAL BOOK ENTRIES           |   |                                   |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| NAME                            | ♥ | WI                                |
| Joan Perry and Jo Horne         | ♥ | Ladbroke & Deppers Bridge WI      |
| Janet Livingston                | ♥ | Norton Lindsey WI                 |
| Kay Roberts                     | ♥ | Dunchurch & Thurlaston WI         |
| Pam Gould                       | ♥ | Church Lawford & Kings Newnham WI |
| Jenny Millington                | ♥ | Dunchurch & Thurlaston WI         |
| Sue Andrews                     | ♥ | Great Alne & Kinwarton WI         |
| Jill Soffe and Bridget Cuthbert | ♥ | Priors Marston & Hardwick WI      |
| Karen Baxter                    | ♥ | Norton Lindsey WI                 |





# TICKET SHOP

www.ticketsource.com/wfwi



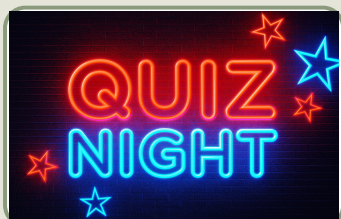
**Electrical PAT Testing Session -  
Federation House  
Wed 26 August  
10.30am  
£2.50 per item**

**WI Day Celebration - Cream Tea  
Wed 16 September  
2pm  
Hatton Village Hall  
£7 - members only**



**Water Treatment Site Tour  
Friday 18 September  
9.45am  
£5 - members only**

**Serious Science -  
How to Make a Honeybee  
Mon 21 September  
Leamington Spa  
£10 - guests welcome**



**Federation Quiz Night  
Fri 25 September  
7pm  
Bedworth or Napton  
£20 per team of 4 - members**

**Coventry & Solihull Waste Disposal Visit  
Wed 30 September  
10am  
£5 - members only**



**BOOK NOW**





# Speaker in the Spotlight

We are Phil and Kate, a local husband and wife team who, quite unexpectedly, found ourselves starting a completely new creative chapter later in life as independent children's book publishers. What began as simple bedtime stories to help Kate through a period of insomnia gradually grew into the Kitten McKitten children's book series – rooted in traditional values of kindness, friendship and resilience.

In our talk we share the story behind our journey, including:

- What it's really like to start something new later in life
- Learning new skills when you never expected to
- Finding the confidence to develop an idea that matters to us
- A reminder that it's never too late to create, learn or begin again

The talk is relaxed and story-led rather than technical or promotional. Members are welcome to look at the books and materials afterwards if they wish, but the focus is very much on inspiration, creativity, and possibility.

## Phil & Kate Kennedy



**Cost:**

**Free**

**Contact:**

**Tel: 07704 801974**

**Email:**

**[pakennedy@kittenmckitten.com](mailto:pakennedy@kittenmckitten.com)**



**Check out our Speaker Directory on the website**  
**[www.warwickshirewi.org.uk](http://www.warwickshirewi.org.uk)**





# WI Birthday Celebrations



## A Very Special Milestone for Grendon WI

Grendon WI recently celebrated its 85th anniversary with a wonderful afternoon tea party. Members enjoyed a delicious buffet, a fascinating display of archive scrapbooks, a raffle and quiz, as well as a beautiful anniversary cake, which was cut by Chairlady Ann. A big thank you to the committee for organising such a lovely afternoon and to all the members who joined in the celebrations. Here's to the next 85 years!

**Julie Sanders**





# Event Update

*A look back at recent events*



## Machine Sewing Workshop with Claire Salmon



The Machine Sewing Workshop with Claire Salmon at Federation House in June was enjoyed by all who attended. During the morning session, participants made three different styles of zipped bags, while the afternoon session focused on creating a practical thread catcher and pincushion. It was a great day of sewing, learning and creativity.

## Visit to RHS Malvern Spring Show 2026

The WI visit to the festival was both interesting and inspiring. The weather was magnificent, and Anne and Tim, our coach driver, made the day extra special.

We viewed the famous show gardens and were able to chat with the designers. The Floral Marquee was my favourite part of the day, with all the beautiful colours, wonderful smells, and stunning displays. There were many stalls to explore, including crafts, cooking demonstrations, food, plants, seeds, free samples, and so many tempting things to buy.

By the end of the day, we were all exhausted, but still smiling, chatting, and making new friends. My thanks go to Anne, Tim, and all the lovely people on the coach. What an absolutely brilliant day!

**Lorraine Richardson - Blue Belles WI**





# Event Update

*A look back at recent events*



## Bloody Leamington - True Crime Walk

We enjoyed a fascinating evening exploring the darker side of Royal Leamington Spa on the Bloody Leamington walking tour with crime historian Adam Wood. As the group wandered through the town's streets, Adam brought to life a series of chilling true crime stories, revealing the hidden history behind familiar landmarks. His engaging storytelling and wealth of historical knowledge made for a thoroughly entertaining and thought-provoking walk, giving everyone a glimpse into Leamington's intriguing and sometimes sinister past.





# Event Update

*A look back at recent events*



## WFWI Croquet Evening

In July, 19 members and guests enjoyed a Croquet Taster Evening at Kenilworth Croquet Club. A large group from Heart of England WI in Balsall Common joined us this year, having transferred into Warwickshire Federation, and were pleased to see that we offered a croquet evening. Despite not having a cup to play for, there were some very competitive games.

We were coached to play a short form of golf croquet, and Linda and her team worked hard to make sure we were all in the right place for each match. Some people played as pairs and others as singles, with the 'home' teams moving around the courts to play their games against different 'away' teams.

We were luckier with the weather this year. It was much cooler than the stifling heat of last year, and we even had a few drops of warm rain to keep us cool.

Zena Avery from Leek Wootton WI and Penny and John Scott (Ullenhall WI and guest) top-scored with nine points to share the win. Ruth McCartney (Wolston WI) and Kath Jephcott (Heart of England WI) tied with Lesley Cobain and Carol Colclough (both Heart of England WI) for third place.

It was a fun evening, and I promised to look into an annual croquet competition cup. What do you think?

## Claire Whitehead-Wall WFWI Trustee







# News from our WIs



## Ullenhall WI

### A Visit to Marie Curie Hospice, Solihull: Gardens of Tranquillity

Earlier this summer, a group of us from Ullenhall WI had the privilege of visiting the Marie Curie Hospice in Solihull—an experience that left a lasting impression on us all.

Tucked away in a peaceful setting, the hospice offers far more than clinical care. One of its most inspiring features is its beautiful gardens, lovingly maintained by a dedicated team of 14 volunteers. These green-fingered heroes give their time freely, and their efforts are evident in every carefully tended border and thoughtfully placed plant.

We were treated to a guided tour of the gardens, which was both informative and moving. Each area provides a tranquil retreat, and it was clear that these spaces offer not only beauty but also genuine comfort to patients and their families during incredibly difficult times.

After our tour, we enjoyed a delightful afternoon tea. For a suggested donation of £10 per person, visitors can enjoy this treat while helping to support the volunteer gardeners in maintaining and improving the gardens. For our members, it offered a chance to relax, reflect, and enjoy each other's company. The cakes were delicious, the tea piping hot, and the conversation flowed.



For those interested, there were also lovely items available to purchase—from Marie Curie greeting cards to garden-themed gifts—with all proceeds going to a worthy cause.

Our visit reminded us of the power of community, the importance of volunteering, and the healing touch of nature. We left feeling humbled and grateful, and determined to spread the word about the wonderful work being carried out at the Solihull hospice.

If your WI group would like to arrange a similar visit, please contact Jane Strugnell, one of the hospice garden volunteers, on 07778 444658 to enquire about possible tour dates.

We wholeheartedly recommend it.

**Kim Edwards - President**



Location details  
Marie Curie Hospice Garden,  
Marsh Lane,  
Solihull,  
Warwickshire,  
B91 2PQ





# News from our WIs



## Old Milverton WI

On a sunny day in June, a group from Old Milverton WI set out on the community bus for a visit to Peterborough Cathedral. Our objective was to see The Longest Yarn 2 – A Thread Through History: Britain at War.

This remarkable exhibition was created by an army of knitters and crocheters from across the UK to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. It follows an earlier project celebrating the 80th anniversary of D-Day in 2024. Both are considered modern-day versions of the Bayeux Tapestry, depicting historically accurate events across 80 panels, each measuring one metre in length.

Britain at War covers the period from 3 September 1939, when war was declared, to 8 May 1945, celebrated as Victory in Europe (VE) Day. It charts key moments of the war, both civilian and military, including evacuation, blackouts, the Blitz, food rationing, and military successes and failures. It also illustrates how ordinary people coped with the many and varied challenges of daily life during a time of conflict.

As well as the panels, there are eight life-sized figures based on the wartime service of real individuals. Our attention was particularly caught by the Land Army rat catcher, complete with the bodies of her victims – a vital task that not many of us would have been keen to undertake! The exhibition brought back childhood memories for some members, while giving the younger members an entertaining and thought-provoking visual history lesson. Those of us who knit were left in awe of the skill of the crafters and the incredible attention to even the tiniest detail. All in all, it was a grand day out, combining history, creativity and good company – an enjoyable and memorable visit for everyone.







# News from our WIs



## Bedworth Belles WI

On a hot and sunny July afternoon, 39 members and guests of Bedworth Belles WI enjoyed a private tour of Arbury Hall, a Grade I listed Elizabethan mansion house in Nuneaton.

Split into three smaller groups, our guides shared the fascinating history of the Hall and explained how it has been transformed over the centuries. Set within beautifully landscaped gardens and surrounded by more than 100 acres of lakes and parkland, the Hall was built on the ruins of a 12th-century Augustinian priory.

The Newdegate family have owned Arbury Hall since 1586, transforming it into an early Gothic Revival masterpiece during the 18th century. We were amazed by the spectacular fan-vaulted ceilings, although unfortunately photography was not permitted during the tour. The Hall remains very much a family home and is currently home to the 4th Viscount Daventry, his wife and their three children.

Following the tour, we enjoyed afternoon tea in the Stables, an impressive building in its own right. The front entrance was designed by Sir Christopher Wren, who was reportedly paid two silver candlesticks for his work.

A wonderful afternoon was enjoyed by all and provided a very welcome escape from the temperatures above 30°C outside.



## Earlsdon WI

The Presidents Have It!

At our meeting on Thursday 9 July, we enjoyed a fascinating talk about the Suffragettes and their powerful motto, 'Deeds Not Words'. We also celebrated a very special milestone – the 16th anniversary of our WI's formation.

Pictured are the current and past Presidents who attended the meeting.

Left to right: Jo Byrne, Eileen Kerrigan, Eve Jones, Jane Edwards and Mary Lee.







# News from our WIs



## Twin Rivers Coleshill WI

Some of the members of Twin Rivers Coleshill WI placed their latest topper on the postbox. This one celebrates the centenary of Coleshill Town Hall. They also did a display of their history in Coleshill.



## Twirls Ryton-on-Dunsmore WI

We enjoyed a lovely sunny day in Stratford-upon-Avon rather than our usual evening meeting. The weather was perfect, some of our members went for a walk along the river with a refreshing drink or two and some enjoyed a little shopping.

A great day was had by everyone!





# News from our WIs



## Earlsdon WI

On June 28th, 19 people joined us for a lovely WI fundraising cream tea organised by the Earlsdon WI committee in support of the Esther Project through the Chair's Challenge.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along and helped support this worthwhile cause. Special thanks also to Mocha Lounge, who kindly supplied the scones, jam and cream at a very reasonable price to help us raise as much money as possible.

A great afternoon of tea, chat and fundraising – thank you all for your support!

**Eve Jones - President**



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## Dosthill WI – Chill and Chatter Summer Event

In 2024, Dosthill WI received a grant for a community project and held a one-off Christmas event. Its success highlighted the need for a regular community get-together, and Chill and Chatter was launched.

Now in its third year, the group is run by eight WI members and regularly welcomes over 35 people, mainly from the local community.

Special summer and Christmas parties include sandwiches, tea and cakes, and entertainment from a singer, with a local school choir joining them at Christmas.

A wonderful initiative bringing the local community together.







# News from our WIs



## Bedworth Belles WI

Tommy, a 'desert rat' soldier crocheted by Bedworth Belles WI member Steph Morris, made his debut appearance on Armed Forces Day on Saturday 27th June, firstly sitting on guard in the town's covered market before taking to the wheel of an SAS armoured vehicle.

Gail Bend - Secretary



## Harbury WI

As the WI, we were delighted to treat our members to a traditional cream tea at Jamie's Lakeside. Freshly baked scones with cream and jam, together with a choice of tea or coffee, made for a wonderful afternoon. It was lovely to spend time together, and a great time was had by all!





# News from our WIs



## Aloha! - West Warwick Group

The West Warwick Group is made up of WIs from Budbrooke, Hatton Park, Norton Lindsey, Shrewley and Snitterfield. We meet once a year and take it in turns to host an event, usually including a light supper with dessert and entertainment.

On Friday 26th June, Norton Lindsey WI hosted this year's Group Event based on a Hawaiian Theme. We booked a Ukulele Band; sent out the invitations to our 'Aloha Party' and dressed our Village hall with tropical plants, grass skirts, hibiscus flowers, surfboards and shells.

We created some delicious Hawaiian themed cold platters and made a range of tasty desserts to tempt everyone. We encouraged bright, tropical attire and they all did us proud. The room was a riot of colour and there was a wonderful cheery hum of conversation as the evening began and everyone bought their raffle tickets. Guests were greeted with colourful leis and fruity mocktails from our Tiki Bar such as 'Hawaiian Delight and Tropical Sunset'.

Fortunately for us, we were blessed with tropical weather and members took full advantage of the stage that had been dressed as a beach for photo opportunities because the band decided to cancel at short notice due to the heat.

Robin, the husband of Gill, one of our programme organisers, was able to put a suitable 'Aloha Party' playlist together, lent us a large speaker system and saved the day!

Hurray for members and their husbands and families, who helped in the planning and organising of the event, which was no mean feat in the heat that day reaching 34 degrees at times.

It was a wonderful occasion for participants from all five WIs to mingle and get to know each other, helped along by a Hawaiian themed table quiz and Hawaiian Bingo... who knew there was such a thing?

Our Warwickshire Federation Chair, Ruth McCartney, joined us as a special guest for the celebration and everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy our light hearted summer get together.

We've made some wonderful friendships and strengthened existing ones and we all look forward to next year's Group event.

**Sue Steel**

**Norton Lindsey WI Secretary**







# News from our WIs



## Finham WI

Visit to Stoneleigh Abbey on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

At the 2024 WFWI Annual Meeting, Finham WI was lucky enough to be awarded an Educational Bursary. The members were asked how they would like to use it and voted unanimously to have a visit to Stoneleigh Abbey. Earlier in the year, Sheila Woolfe had given a talk on Jane Austen's links to Warwickshire, specifically Stoneleigh so they were keen to further explore that connection.

So on a bright, but blustery September morning, eighteen members met at the entrance for a one hour guided tour of the home of the Leigh family from 1561 to 1990. Our tour guide was very knowledgeable and full of interesting facts, Jane Austen being just a small part of the interesting history. Jane Austen was related to the Leighs on her mother's side. She visited in 1806 with her mother Cassandra, and it is said that she was so inspired that she wove descriptions into her novels.

After the tour, there was time for refreshments in the vaulted tearooms, and all agreed that it was a very enjoyable educational visit.





# Meet the WI



## Heart of England WI

Heart of England WI is based in Balsall Common and has been meeting since September 1968. We meet on the second Thursday of each month (except August) at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Our membership has flourished over the last few years, and we now have more than 70 members, with an age range spanning over 50 years.

We keep our members busy with a wide range of additional groups and activities, including Craft Club, Let's Eat, Coffee Mornings, Tea Afternoons, Rambles, a Cinema and Theatre Group, Book Club, a possible second Evening Book Club, and a Sewing Group.



If you would like to be in our feature 'Meet the WI', please email the Editor for more information.

We recently transferred back to the Warwickshire Federation from the West Midlands Federation, giving us easier access to County House and Federation events. Since returning, we have attended several classes at County House and were delighted to achieve second and third place in the recent Croquet Competition.

Last year, we held a very successful CPR drop-in event, attracting more than 70 local people. We also raise funds by baking homemade cakes and serving teas at the Warwickshire Watercolourists' Exhibition every August Bank Holiday.

We look forward to meeting members from other WIs, taking part in Federation events, and enjoying a little friendly competition in the years ahead.





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Thank you to everyone who contributed articles, stories and photographs.



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## Have a story to share?

We'd love to hear from you! Please send your articles and photographs to [editor@wfw.co.uk](mailto:editor@wfw.co.uk). Please ensure everyone featured has given permission before submitting.

### Next Edition - October

Our next issue will be available as a **printed magazine**. Please contact your **WI Secretary** for ordering details.

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