



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes.



Words from the Chair

August/September 2025

I write this article as we finally get a bit of rain, not much to make much difference to the dry ground but at least it's a bit cooler. We could have done with these slightly cooler temperatures for the Croquet held on the 10th July at Kenilworth. Despite the heat members from across the West Midlands came together for an enjoyable afternoon of Croquet. Thank you to all those that supported this event as well as the quiz at Shirley Community Centre, held the week before.

There are several more events coming up - skittles with a fish and chip supper at Aldridge and Hockley Heath in September, our Annual Meeting in October and a trip to the Rep Theatre in December.

Liz Galloway (WM Treasurer) held the first of the Treasurers' Workshops in July at our office in Spencer Street, with more sessions to follow. Dates for further Treasurers' workshops along with President and Secretary workshops will be circulated after the summer break. Anyone wanting to find out more about what the various Officer's roles entail as well those of you already in the roles are very welcome to book a place.

Finally, congratulations to Victory Belles WI who featured in the July/August edition of WI Life. Victory Belles marked the 80th Anniversary of VE Day by singing wartime tunes to visitors at the National Memorial Arboretum. The next edition of COG will be out at the end of September, as Federation Trustees along with many WIs, take a well earned break. Enjoy!

Jackie Poyner, Federation Chair.



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Forthcoming events

- 01/09/25 - Deadline for 2026 resolution submission.
- 15/09/25 - 7.30pm, Dental Health Matters Zoom update.
- 20/09/25 - Skittles Evening at Hockley Heath
- 27/09/25 - Skittles Evening at Aldridge
- 29/09/25 - Week of River Action commences.
- 04/10/25 - West Midlands Federation Annual Meeting.
- 27/10/25 - 7.30pm, Resolution to Campaign, Zoom.
- 24/11/25 - 7.30pm, Meet our Policymakers, Zoom.
- 03/12/25 - Sherlock Holmes at Birmingham Rep.

Would you like to see your WI featured here? We would!

Send your contributions, with your name, and your WI name as the title to:

COGMEDIAWMFWI@gmail.com

Next deadline: 15/09/25

Please send submissions by the above date to ensure inclusion. It may not be possible to include all submissions. Texts may be altered to fit available space. Please send original images as individual jpeg files, documents as word documents, and include your WI's name in the email title.

Many thanks. **Lisa Blackburn, Editor.**



Berkswell WI



In July we were delighted to congratulate June Smitten, member of Berkswell WI, for being awarded the Berkswell Association for the Prosecution of Felons Trophy for services to the Church and village.

The Prosecution of Felons began prior to 1790 and June is the only second woman to be awarded the trophy!

Well done June! And, a member of the WI!



Our August meeting celebrated our 105th Birthday! We invited other WI members to a fabulous afternoon tea. The celebration cake was made by Berkswell WI member June Smitten, not only an award winner but a wonderful cake baker. Two new members, (pictured above) Anne Short (left) and Lin Davis (right) cut the Celebration cake with President Pamela Griffiths (centre). It certainly was a wonderful 105th Celebration!

Pamela Griffiths, President Berkswell WI

Hockley Heath



The July meeting was a flower and craft show held at the Baptist Hall; it attracted entries in all categories.

Above are the delicious potato scones and the fuschia entries. Carla and Ann (below) were the judges; their ruling was final!



Frances and Caroline came joint 1st, Jackie and Yvonne joint 2nd and Isabel 3rd. Below is President Louise presenting Frances with the winners' trophy.



A team of four contestants attended the Federation

Quiz at Shirley Community Centre. President Louise, Ann, Caroline & Isabel came 2nd. They also came joint 1st in the Table Quiz so excelled themselves! They definitely enjoyed the evening. **Pat Rhodes**



Allesley Afternoon WI



We always to strive include a variety of activities for our members and take part in the village special events. In July, Allesley Village celebrated 50 Golden years of the origin of Allesley Festival in 1975. This coincided with the 60th celebration of the formation of the WI. As part of the celebrations, we took part in the Scarecrow Trail and decided Winnie the Pooh was an ideal theme with the colour of golden honey, the crucial importance of bees for the environment and food security as vital pollinators and the fact that one of our members husbands is a local honey producer. We won 2nd prize and were overjoyed with the outcome.



In celebration of the diversity of activities, we also invited Roxanne for the second time to come and encourage us to take part in a belly dancing afternoon, fun for all. Our members looked fabulous and we certainly enjoyed the whole 2025 festival.

Yvonne Glowacz



Walsall Woods WI



We visited Blist's Hill Victorian Town and Ironbridge in Shropshire on 15th July 2025. A very enjoyable day despite a few rain showers. We ate chips, had a sing song in the New Inn pub which has been moved brick by brick from Walsall to the site, and was linked to one of our members as her relative had been the licensee many years ago.



On arrival you can change your money into Victorian coins to purchase items. The site has a fantastic pharmacy and members purchased items such as Liquorice wood and Opium soap.

There is a Bakery that sells delicious bread and cobs. It was educational to see how a Victorian town would have been, a really interesting experience and similar to the Black Country Living Museum. To end the day, we stopped off in



Ironbridge, just 10 minutes away. I want to thank the Education Committee who awarded us some money towards this trip. **Sue Laws, President Walsall Wood WI (all photos)**



Balsall Heath & Moseley WI



BH&M President Karen is joined by Marie (centre) and Chrissie (right) who came to talk about the amazing scrapstore in Northfield. They run a shop and various community activities, such as the "Big Sort" helping those who struggle with hoarding or clutter to decide what to keep, donate or let go, turning excess into items that can be used to benefit clients of the scrapstore. They also run the Golden Threads Bereavement Café, Chatty chairs low impact exercise group, Warm Welcome, where people go to relax & craft, and Brummie Mummies, where mums can craft with their children. Find out more at [Events — Birmingham Playcare Network](#).



After a fun game of Scrapstore Bingo, we began crafting. We learned to use a Lucet to make

decorative cord; paper for origami shells and the Kumihimo technique to make braids or 'friendship bracelets' from embroidery thread.

Lisa Blackburn



Bournville WI



Bournville members met for a buffet luncheon to which all members contributed three items, with sandwiches and savouries provided by the committee funds to celebrate our 36th Anniversary.



Members didn't forget those less fortunate and had a foodbank collection.

The delicious cake made by WI member Tess was raffled and won by Ann.



Lunch club members enjoyed a delicious meal at Paprika in Selly Oak.



200 Club - £10 Winner
July 2025 - no.141,
Megan Rossiter, Newton WI
August 2025 – no 59
Mabel Cronin - Green Lane



Arden WI



Arden Women's Institute invited former Federation Chair Jackie Gregory to give a talk on her fundraising efforts which included Jackie's homemade chutneys and jams.

Members were captivated by Jackie's inspirational efforts in raising much needed essentials, funds & materials for a school in The Gambia. Jackie's numerous efforts included seeking donations from organisations, the local community and WI Members,



the many photographs in the talk; included donations of the sewing machines, knitted blankets, shoe boxes with toiletries, etc. all of which were delivered, packaged and transported to a ferry port.

Receiving donations was just a small part of Jackie's efforts, the funds raised from Jackie's homemade chutneys and jams were to cover transportation costs both in the UK and in The Gambia. It was a pleasure to have Jackie at Arden WI and to hear her inspirational talk.

**Arden
Committee**



Campaigns

WMFWI

Virtual Campaigns Café

This new café style meeting space is open to all WI members from across the West Midlands. It's a free, one hour, monthly get together on Zoom, with invited speakers where we can find out more about WI campaigns and resolutions, share our WI campaigning experiences and be inspired.

Register for free, and details with joining instructions and passcodes will arrive in your inbox 7 days before the date of the meeting, at

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wmfwi-virtual-campaigns-cafe-tickets-1532898664169>

or send an email to wmfwi.pa@gmail.com



Monday 15th September 2025

19.30hrs- 20.30hrs - Via Zoom

WI Campaign update - Dental Health Matters - a local WI group talk about their experiences.



Monday 27th October 2025

19.30hrs- 20.30hrs

Via Zoom

How a WI resolution becomes a campaign?
An update for WI members and groups on voting during 2026!



Monday 24th November 2025,
19.30hrs- 20.30hrs

Via Zoom

Invited speaker
'Meet our WM policymakers'
NEW - 1st in series



Aldridge Quiz



Despite the July heat, WI members from across the West Midlands met for the annual Croquet Event at Kenilworth. Support and tuition on the basic rules of the game were provided by members of the Croquet Club. Congratulations to this year's winner, pictured

above; Helen Clarke (Heart of England WI) alongside Linda Edwards who over saw the afternoon and is a member of the Croquet Club.



26 teams took part in the Shirley Quiz on Friday 4th July. Congratulations to the winning teams; Quinton WI (above) who won the quiz and Heart of England WI, winners of the table top round.

Thank you to all those took part in the evening
Jackie Poyner



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

**WEST MIDLANDS FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES**

**51ST ANNUAL
MEETING**

**at the
Hyatt Regency Hotel
2 Bridge Street, Birmingham
B1 2JZ
Saturday 4th October 2025**

Cost £12

9.30am – Coffee and Pastries

10.30am – Federation Business followed by Sarah
P Corbett – Founder of Craftivist Collective

Lunch is not provided,

multiple lovely venues are nearby.

After lunch, a talk with Dr Sarah Hussein, Author
and Educator, whose book celebrates the women
who raised awareness of environmental damage
in India in the 20th century.

Book your ticket @ <https://ticketlab.co.uk>.

Please click on 'Find an event' and enter '51st
Annual Meeting' to reach the booking page.

Editor's Choice

Start planning now for your week of River Action, between 29th September and 5th October. A simple action without getting wet is to write to, or tag on social media, your MP and appliance manufacturers, demanding legislation for microplastic filters in washing machines.

If you don't mind getting muddy, arrange a group to take part in the great UK Water Blitz, and test your local river water quality, between 19th & 22nd September. Find out more here: [Great UK WaterBlitz - Earthwatch Europe](#).

