



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes.



April 2024

Words from the Chair



By the time you are reading this item we will have celebrated Mothering Sunday or Mother's Day.



Mothering Sunday and Mother's Day are commonly thought of as being the same thing. The difference between the two lies in their origin. Mothering Sunday is a Christian holiday in some parts of Europe which always falls on the last Sunday in Lent.

The holiday had little to do with Mothers for most of its history; seeming to start in the early 16th century for people to visit their mother church, the main church or cathedral in the area rather than their actual mother.

Later Mothering Sunday became a day off for servants to see their families. Children in service were also given the day off when they would pick flowers to place in the church or take to their mothers.

The more recognisable form of Mother's Day began in the 20th century in West Virginia, US. In 1907 Anna Jarvis held the first Mother's Day service in memory of her mother who had been a peace activist caring for wounded soldiers of both sides during the American Civil War. Anna wanted to set aside a day to honour mothers, "the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world".



Mother's Day leads us towards Easter and Spring which bring forth new life in so many ways. Daffodils, tulips and other spring flowers are everywhere, trees are beginning to blossom and we look forward to warmer days ahead. Easter is a very special time of year for so many people and on Easter Sunday it is a time for families to come together to celebrate.

West Midlands Federation are also looking forward to things that lie ahead. We hope that many of you will join us to celebrate our 50th Anniversary year. We have the County Show in April, an Afternoon Tea at the Hyatt Hotel in June and our Annual Meeting at Austin Court in October. Several other activities have been arranged and we hope to see many of you supporting and attending as many as possible.

**“Happy Easter to everyone
from the Board of Trustees”**

Best wishes, Cathryn

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**200 Club Winner
March 2024
Sheila Moore
Streetly Evening
WI**

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Your WI

Bournville WI



Bournville WI were visited by **Clive Garner**, who gave a demonstration of silk painting. He brought samples of silk to give an idea of the texture of the canvas, talked of the history of silk and began the floral creation shown above, with tips. Silk comes from the cocoons of the mulberry silk moth, bombyx mori, and first evidence of its use was found in China, dating back over 3000 years BC. It is said that a silk pillow is very good for avoiding wrinkles! Pictured is **Sandra Walton** buying one of his beautiful painted silk cards.

Lisa Blackburn, Bournville WI Dual Member

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

Send your contributions, with your name, to COGMEDIAWMFWI@gmail.com

Next deadline: 10/04/23.

Please send submissions by the tenth of the month 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

Green Lane WI



Some of the ladies from Green Lane WI enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea at Notcutt's Garden Centre in Shirley. Lots of fun, friendship and fellowship was had by all, along with a very satisfying treat!

Belinda Piasecki, group member.

Newton WI



Newton WI had a very enjoyable afternoon playing skittles with delicious meals served between games. This was our first afternoon of skittles, at the Boathouse, Rushall, Aldridge, following COVID and was arranged for us by Diane. It was very much appreciated. The winners were Jazzie Ladies!

Melanie Wisher Newton WI.

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Four Oaks WI

The speaker at our February meeting was John Wilson, Fund Ambassador for the Buddy bag foundation.

John began by asking us to imagine ourselves as a child living in a domestic violence situation at home. It is night time and suddenly the police are in your room and you are speedily taken with your mother, 50 to 60 miles away to a refuge, a minimum distance for safety. You leave with only your pyjamas. Around 48,000 children find themselves in this situation each year.

The Buddy bag foundation provides each child at the refuge with a bag containing 12 essential items. Groups of 20 volunteers pack the bags which are divided into boys, girls and 5 different age groups. Volunteers pack 180 bags.

John showed us a sample bag. A teddy bear is the last thing put into the bag and thus the first item the child sees when they open it. The bag itself gives the child reassurance and has all they will need for their first few days. Each bag costs £25.

The founder of Buddy bags is Karen Williams OBE. Karen read about the work of Buddy Bags Australia whilst there in 2014 and contacted them. On her return to England, she set up Buddy bags in 2015.

There are no administrative fees or staff salaries due to many company sponsors. In 2022, 57,782 bags were delivered and the foundation won the Queens Award for voluntary services. Presently, there are 314 groups of 4,850 volunteers delivering to 338 refuges in Great Britain. The foundation's headquarters in Minworth also serves for packing.

John concluded by saying that we if we'd like to support them, we can help with packing, online donations, knitting, making a toiletry bag, packing a challenge box or by simply "spreading the word".



Pictured is John and his wife, with three Four Oaks members, holding teds similar to the ones they make to put in the bags. John is wearing his t shirt that shows they won the Queens Award for Voluntary services in 2022. For more information about Buddy bags, follow the link: [About | The Buddy Bag Foundation](#)

**Sue Richards, Programme Secretary,
Four Oaks WI**

Great Barr WI



Instead of our usual out and about day, the ladies from Great Barr WI took part in a 4-hour session with Jayne Collins from the Hereford and Worcester Fire Department, who showed the ladies how to do CPR, (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation). There were 33 ladies attending the session with some practising their CPR technique. Although resuscitation is a serious subject the ladies refreshed skills and enjoyed the afternoon. **Elaine Williams, Media Officer**

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Balsall Heath & Moseley WI



Balsall Heath and Moseley WI were creative with Polymer Clay, making beads, earrings, pendants and brooches. We discovered that there is an 'own brand' product equally as good as the branded, but were slightly thwarted by a misbehaving oven to harden our finished produce. We were all engrossed with our creations, but there was still time for chat and delicious homemade mango cake and currant biscuits.



Editor's Pick - Voter ID

On May 2nd 2024, some WM areas will have local elections, alongside the Mayoral Election for Birmingham. You will now need voter ID.

Suitable ID includes UK or EU driving licence or passport, Blue Badge, even an older person's bus pass. You may check [here](#) to see if the ID you plan to use is acceptable. If not, you may apply for a 'Voter Authority Certificate'. Follow the below link.

[Apply for photo ID to vote \(called a 'Voter Authority Certificate'\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Don't lose your right to vote, check you have everything you need, now!

Forthcoming Events 2024

26/04	City Nature Challenge
27/04	The WMFWI County Show, Bromwich Hall
31/05	Friday Quiz, 7pm Aldridge Church Centre
10/06	WMFWI member workshop. with Friends of the Earth.
21/06	Friday Quiz – 7pm Shirley Community Centre

Resolutions Update

The Resolution that will be taken to the Annual Meeting in June is "Dental Health Matters".

"There is a chronic shortage of NHS Dentists and people are suffering health issues as a result. The NFWI calls on the Government to increase investment in the training and retention of dentists and to review the current inadequate NHS contracts in order to ensure everyone can access an NHS dentist wherever they live."

The results of the shortlist are below:

2023/24 Resolutions		Votes
1	Dental Health Matters	37772
2	Impacts of Poor Housing Conditions	27608
3	Say "No" to Gambling Advertising	20077
4	Improve Outcomes for Women in the Criminal Justice System	9949
Total Votes Received		95406

More info is available at [My WI | Resolution selection results announcement \(thewi.org.uk\)](#)



Don't forget to follow us on Facebook for regular posts and updates.

<https://www.facebook.com/WMFWI>

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