



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes.



Words from the Chair

Welcome to the October edition of Cog in the Tree.

Final preparations for our 51st Annual Meeting at the Hyatt Hotel on Saturday 4th October are being made and I look forward to meeting some of you on the day.

The latest National campaign "Bystanders Can be Life Savers" is taking off at a pace across the country and I know that several of you have already had CPR training from local organisations. If you haven't already booked a training session I would urge you to do so, it could save a life! In the meantime, why not look at [DefibFinder - find the defibrillators nearest you.](#) and locate your nearest defibrillator, then check you can find its physical location and whether it is available 24/7. After your training, you'll be prepared and confident to use it to help save a life.

Have you ever wondered how a WI Resolution becomes a Campaign? The next WMF Virtual WI Campaigns Cafe on Monday 27th October is looking at just that:

"How a WI resolution becomes a Campaign."

It is an update for WI members and groups on voting during 2026! It's an hour long session, 7.30 - 8.30pm via Zoom and it is free! Remember WI Campaigns are your chance to create a change.

Jackie Poyner, Federation Chair.

Forthcoming events

29/09/25 – Week of River Action commences.
 04/10/25 - West Midlands Federation Annual Meeting.
 06/10/25 - First Herefordshire Federation online class
 09/10/25 - Black History Month Webinar
 – Black Dance.
 27/10/25 - 7.30pm, Resolution to Campaign, Zoom.
 24/11/25 - 7.30pm, Meet our Policymakers, Zoom.
 25/11/25 - Start of the 16 Days of Activism Against
 Gender based Violence.
 28/11/25 – Coercive Control Webinar (MyWI)
 03/12/25 - Sherlock Holmes at Birmingham Rep.



October 2025

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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: 20/10/25

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.**



Hockley Heath WI



In July, Liz Roberts came to the Baptist Church and treated us to a Glass Fusion workshop. We had a lovely afternoon concentrating on glueing glass together before it was fired in a kiln. We were all really pleased with our results below.



Also July, Frances, Ann B & Pat S and other members used their bus passes to travel to Stratford to explore the area.



Right: President Louise, Joyce, Sue & Jackie.

In August we enjoyed the Presidents Tea in a member's (Maggie's) garden. Each member attending brings a small plate of both savoury and sweet food to share. We ended up with a banquet.



Above: Resting after the August feast.

At our September meet, Nick Cole, a volunteer from Warwickshire Search and Rescue, introduced their work. They are one of thirty-four groups under the umbrella of Lowland Rescue Teams, who are all volunteers. Pictured is Gail Hare making a donation to



Lowland Rescue as Nick Cole holds the bucket still.

Warwickshire Search and Rescue are tasked by the emergency services to find missing persons or persons for whom there is concern, on foot, using drones in the air and wading through mud in rivers and lakes. They get called out between sixty to eighty times per year, but receive no government funding, it is all volunteer based, so fundraising is a significant burden on those who are also putting in the search effort. More information about Lowland Rescue can be found here: [Lowland Rescue](https://www.lowlandrescue.co.uk/). More about Warwickshire Search & Rescue can be found here: [Warwickshire Search and Rescue | Warwickshire Search and Rescue](https://www.warwickshiresearchandrescue.co.uk/)

Pat Rhodes



Four Oaks WI



Karen Handley, family liaison worker of Sutton Grange Care Home, and Alzheimer's Ambassador, visited Four Oaks to talk about "Coping with Dementia".

Dementia can affect any age, but not everyone will succumb to it. There are over one hundred types of this brain disease; for which there is currently no cure, but with early diagnosis some medications help to slow the process. Alzheimer's pertains to short term memory loss, warning signals may be when someone gets lost on a regular route or needs reminding several times in short succession. Dementia impacts all a person does, such as communication, dressing, using cutlery, making a drink and how a person views daily life. Perception is affected – a black mat can be interpreted as a black hole. They regress to younger times and may not recognise household equipment. However, a person can still live well with dementia; Karen shared carers and friends can help by listening, reducing distractions, showing patients old photos, speaking slower, asking singular questions. A stern stance can be distressing to the patient; people's feelings stay with them for much longer. Karen spoke of the work of the Dementia Friends charity and how it can be supported.

Four Oaks W.I celebrated V.J day by have a themed garden party. We all dressed in red white and blue. **Sue Richards**



Bournville WI

Bournville WI's September meeting involved a quiz, with the tiebreaker question of "How many WIs are based in prisons?" Winners won grab bags of chocolate. Credit to Sharon Davis for the fab photos.



The answer is four WIs exist in prisons.



Balsall Heath & Moseley WI

Sadly our plans to work with Pluckybird, Danielle Saxon-Reeves, exploring Music from Medieval to Modern, were thwarted by our hall's management's double-booking. Resilient as always, we contacted those we could and many of us decided to go to the next best place, the pub! We look forward to seeing Pluckybird in the future.

Meanwhile our bookclub has just finished Iris Murdoch's "Sacred & Profane Love Machine" and are now reading Longbourn, (the 'downstairs' to the 'upstairs' of the Pride & Prejudice residence) by Jo Baker.

Our craft group also got off to a good start, but again we ended in the pub! En route we popped into Guthrie & Ghani, to admire the creations of Lauren Guthrie, the 2013 winner of The Great British Sewing Bee Winner, who was present with her collection.



Quinton WI



It's been a busy month for Quinton WI. We were visited by an interesting speaker from the Midlands Freewheelers Blood Bikes, who operate twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year serving hospitals and other NHS facilities

in the West Midlands, and the Midland Air Ambulance. The service is provided by volunteer riders, coordinators and fund raisers who transport blood, human tissue, samples, xrays, patient notes, chemotherapy treatments and donor baby milk. An



impressive group of volunteers, who provide both a professional and rapid response service for the NHS free of charge.

Members also enjoyed Afternoon Tea with good

friends, at Halesowen Golf Club where an array of sandwiches, delicious cakes and endless teapots of tea were consumed. Our Summer supper was held at an Indian Restaurant, The Ameena with lots of laughter, friendship and a gourmet meal.

Nicky Lambert, Quinton WI

Knowle WI



KNOWLE WI celebrated 110 years of WI in the UK at their September Meeting.

In WI tradition a craft and produce show was held and members enjoyed a slice of the celebration cake. **Gill Brownjohn. President**

Boldmere WI



During August our members met up at the Deli in Boldmere for a social get together. Our Walking Group went for a walk in Sutton Park, our Craft Group also met up. Our Book Group met for Afternoon Tea at The Communita Café, pictured above. We also joined Walmley W.I. and others for a meal at the Wishaw Country Club. Two of us played bowls at the Streetly Methodist Bowling Club with some other W.I.s organised by Queslett W.I.

Boldmere W.I. with friends of Sutton Station painted two pictures, now hanging in the Visitors Waiting Room, celebrating 200 Years of our modern railway. WI Members are seen sitting in front of the two paintings. Sue Green, Di Hitchcock, Judy Holmes, Liz Ewing, Mags Rea, Janet Sutton, Ann Thomas and Brenda Whitfield.

Judy Holmes, Boldmere W.I.



Activities

WI Bowls Day



On Thursday 28th August 2025 we had a super day at Streetly Methodist Bowling Club. This year the weather was very kind to us with the sun shining all day. Twenty-five ladies from five local WI's took part, these were: Newton, Streetly, Mere Green, Boldmere and Four Oaks.

We had great fun, several bowling matches and lots of homemade cake, but ultimately, we needed a winner; in first place was Rosemary Gilbert (bottom left) from Four Oaks, with runner up Fizz Bennett (bottom right) from Newton WI.

This wonderful day was organised by Diane Crook and Carol Davies from Newton WI, who were assisted by members from the other WIs.

Sue Bubb, Newton WI



Skittles



Pictured with our Federation Chair Jackie Poyner, are our Aldridge Skittles winners. Below we have the winners at Hockley Heath. The teams were made up of various WIs. Congratulations all.



Campaigns Cafe

How a WI resolution becomes a campaign?

Monday 27th October 2025 - 19.30hrs- 20.30hrs

Via Zoom - An update for WI members and groups on voting during 2026!

'Meet our WM policymakers'

Monday 24th November 2025 - 19.30hrs- 20.30hrs

Via Zoom, Invited speaker, NEW - 1st in series

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

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

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



Harlequin WIs – Pollinator Party



We started with a talk about pollinators and how we can support them in our gardens and green spaces.

Thanks to our speaker Alison Thompson from The Patchwork Meadow for a great introduction & supplying wildflower seed & bee chocolate.

<https://www.thepatchworkmeadow.co.uk/>



Honey-inspired bakes from WI members for refreshment break...



Inspiring bee bath designs by WI members

Mosaic Bee bath workshop in progress - all materials and tuition provided



If you see a bee struggling in the summer months, mix a small pinch of sugar with water, and put a couple of drops in your bowl, not too much, you don't want it gluing him to the surface! Bee will unfurl their proboscis, drink and hopefully fly away.

Success! Together we have created a network of feeding and water stopovers for pollinators across SW Birmingham. **Lynda Gibbon**



Herefordshire Craft & Chat

Herefordshire Federation have invited us to join their online crafting series:

10 Online Craft and Chat—Autumn 2025 Series

You can book all 10 sessions for £25 or choose individual sessions for £5.00 each.

Booking via:

<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FJFK>

or scan the QR code image below by taking a photo on your device.



Online Sessions:

06/10/2025 - 3D Xmas Tree (material)

13/10/2025 - Online Facebook

20/10/2025 - Poppy (Crochet)

27/10/2025 - Marquetry techniques

03/11/2025 - Stitched Cards

07/11/2025 - Scarf (Crochet)

11/11/2025 - Stitched Pouches

18/11/2025 - Online Scrapbooks

25/11/2025 - Embroidery

02/12/2025 - Fun Reindeer Flourishes

Timing:

10:00am - 12:00pm

Delivered to your phone, laptop, tablet or computer in the comfort of your own home.

Online event access details will be provided by the event organiser prior to each booked session.

Contact Details:

admin@herefordshirewi.org.uk

The events look really interesting, let's give them our support, and hopefully learn a new craft too. Note that only the first four are on Mondays, the rest change their days.

Educational Trust

WEST MIDLANDS EDUCATIONAL TRUST

The Educational Trust was established in 1998 following the sale of Knowle WI Hall. Three WI members Innes Brett, Margaret Pountney and Eunice Rockliffe were instrumental in setting up this fund in the face of stern opposition from other interested parties. The sale engendered £225,000 and this was ringfenced for the use of WI members to further educational opportunities.

The three Trustees, Innes Brett (Knowle and Berkswell WIs), Barbara Cook, (Erdington Carnegie WI) and Sally Herd (Knowle WI), who have overseen the management of the fund are stepping down following many years of service and will be replaced by Nancy Coldwell (Knowle WI), Pauline Smart (Berkswell WI) and Lynn Smith (Bournville WI) with effect from October 2025. Their contact details are in the Year Book of which all WIs have 3 copies usually held by the President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

EVERY WI AND WI MEMBER is able to apply for grants from the Trust for educational purposes either as a group activity or for attending a personal course to further a skill or knowledge. For example, previous courses have been for quilting, pottery making or public speaking and group activities have been for a visit to a glass making or pottery workshop.

The Trustees are keen to spend the money on worthwhile causes for the benefit of WI members so please apply for something that appeals to you. We are waiting to hear from you.

NFWI Podcast

ACT NOW, CHANGE FOREVER

The fifth NFWI podcast is now available wherever you get your podcasts, focussing on the Climate Mass Lobby in Westminster in August.

<https://shows.acast.com/660fec81da0a0800160b9d2e/68a476cb73bf5b629881d69d>



Editor's Pick #1 Campaign for Clean Rivers

This week of River Action, what are you doing to support our previous campaign? Please send in the pictures of what your WI has been involved in to improve our water quality for swimming and wildlife.

The WI is still campaigning to achieve stricter testing and regulation on the waste water industry, to prevent sewage sludge contaminated with pollutants and microplastics being spread on farmland.



What can we do?

Lobby your MP – ask if they have joined the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Microplastics – send them a post card. Perhaps include information about your nearest sewage spill, from [Top of the Poops](#) and/or [Sewage Map](#).

Lobby manufacturers to ensure their machines contain filters for microplastics to prevent them getting in the waterways.

If you're concerned about microplastics, consider your clothing, could you switch to natural fibres? If you use a tumble dryer, you will be aware of the amount of microplastics that each wash produces – up to a fistful. Or could you buy more sustainably – recycling goods from charities?

What do you flush down your sink and toilet? Could you ensure no pollutants go down there? Could you switch to eco-friendly produce?

Have you looked at the drains in your street, are they blocked with litter? Could you easily remove that, and other litter, with a litter-picker? Small actions by many people could help us to achieve clean rivers for people and wildlife.

Lisa.

200 Club Winners

**August – Mable Cronin –
Green Lane WI - no. 59.**

**September - Sheila Moore -
Streetly Evening – no.145.**

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

The WI's annual event to help protect people from gender-based violence will soon be upon us, between the 25th November to 10th December.

What will your WI plan to support this event? Perhaps you could have a watch party for the Webinar on Coercive Control on 28th November, 12-1pm? Register your attendance on this page: [My WI | Take Action: 16 Days to Help Mend a Broken System](#)

There are lots of ideas on MyWI to help you with your planning. As individuals, perhaps you could send a letter to your MP, asking them to tackle the injustice for those women who are coerced into offending. Or the disparity of treatment and justice for black women and ethnic minorities when reporting rape or abuse. Survivors of rape are being cross examined upon their previous sexual experiences which bear no relevance to their ordeal. The news this week has revealed the ingrained misogyny in some police forces; the campaign suggests sending a needle, fabric swatch labelled 'the system' and thread to your MP to symbolise the need for repair of a broken system. My WI has a template letter and more information on both this link and the one above. Speak to your committee if you are unable to access the template letters.

[My WI | No More Violence Against Women.](#)

Other actions could be to contact a local women's' refuge and find out how you could help, or showing solidarity for victims of abuse by holding a candlelit vigil. Do something to support women!

