



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes.



November 2023

Words from the Chair

Hello Everyone,



It would be very remiss of me to start my first duty as Chair of West Midlands Federation and not thank the members of the Board who have stepped down as Officers. Lynn and Iris are still on the Board but Kim has stepped down from the board of Trustees. Chris Sears has also stepped down and Juile Afridi Martin has taken a sabbatical for a few months.

I now have been given the honour of steering us through what lies ahead and hope that we can flourish and build on the solid foundation that is the West Midlands Federation.

When I retired, I had lots of time to myself and then decided I needed to fill that time with more than having coffee with former colleagues and friends. I enjoyed doing my garden, going on holiday, baking and the luxury of doing the housework and washing and ironing whenever I wanted to, instead of cramming it into evenings and weekends.

However, I needed more!!!

A visit to my chiropodist changed all that!!! There on the wall was a poster advertising Walmley Evening WI. I discovered that her mother was the President and was encouraged to go and see what it was all about. The rest is history and here I am the Chair of West Midland Federation WI. Despite all the hats I have worn since joining the WI, I am first and foremost a member of the WI.

I have enjoyed visiting WIs in my capacity as Adviser and will still be doing that but what I love is the welcome I receive and seeing how each WI is very individual and being able to chat and be part of their meeting. I hope to also visit other WIs in the Federation. When I go to my own WI, I am just an ordinary member and sit on the back benches chatting and laughing with my WI friends. Recently I was at a social gathering of WI Advisers and at the hotel our waitress asked "who makes the best Victoria Sponge"? I told her Helen Mirren as she buys it from Marks and Spencer!!!

The WI will always be associated with Victoria Sponge, Jam making and Jerusalem but we are more than that. We are members of the WI, a group of ladies who enjoy doing like-minded things and being part of an organisation trying to make a difference to things around them and the world in which we live.

I am fortunate to be part of that and hope that with your support we can move forward into our 50th Anniversary year and celebrate all that we are, what we have achieved so far and look forward to what is to come. **Cathryn**



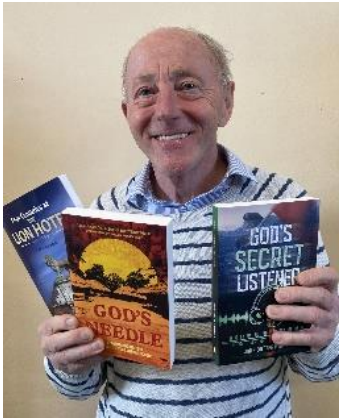
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Your WI News

Bournville WI



Bournville WI had an unexpected last-minute change of speaker after covid struck. Author **John Butterworth** took up the baton to give an entertaining talk on his journey overland to Kathmandu to deliver a defibrillator in the 1970s.

Balsall Heath & Moseley



BH&M were glad to have the talents of their fellow member **Janet Collins**, also of the Knitting and Crochet Guild, and fellow Guild member **Helen Dowling**, teach the history and traditional craft of Dorset Button making.

Members all had the opportunity to create their own, some of the designs are shown above. As you may see, everyone was deeply engrossed in the activity.

Streetly WI



On Thursday 24th August Streetly bowls club hosted its annual WI day for the West Midlands. This year the weather was kind to us and a great day was had by all who took part.

1st place was **Janet King** from Four Oaks WI
2nd place was **Judith Longbottom** from Walsall Wood WI

3rd place was **Judy Homes** from Boldmere.
Thanks to **Diane Crook** and her organising team for a super day. **Sue Bubb, Streetly WI**



Aldridge WI



Recently our ladies were challenged by **Debbie**, one of our members, to make a dress at the end of our meeting – out of newspaper. This is Debbie's explanation of her choice of activity:

'As a child I loved my grandfather's pink newspapers, (the Financial Times) and I used to make paper dresses from them. It was hard work tracking down ten copies to repeat this for WI - but WELL worth it.'

Amazing couture creations from a generation who actually knew how to make dresses! Great team work and fun – especially the catwalk!

Aldridge WI



Dickens & Forshaw Heath WI



Dickens & Forshaw Heath WI

would like to invite you to their
WINTER WARMER

On Monday 4th December at 12.30pm,
In Earlswood Methodist Church, B94 5JR

Tickets price £20.

Available from Jane Henton, Telephone 0121 733 1618



Hawne WI



Hawne WI's October Challenge was to decorate a lollipop stick, **Wendy Evans** won with her representation of Abbey Road.

Anne, Hawne WI

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

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

Next deadline: 10/11/23.

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

Heart of England WI



Heart of England members have been 'seeing red' recently. One of our very talented members, **Sue Green**, made these 'Clean Rivers' Post Box toppers for the centre of Balsall Common, and were much admired. Our next ones will be for Christmas! Also, our thriving Craft group has been busy painting stones to place around Balsall Common for Remembrance Day. They are intended for children to find and take home if wished. This of course, will be advertised on our local Facebook page as usual!

Kathryn Shayler (Secretary)



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Hockley Heath WI



Hockley Heath W.I. have been busy over the summer months, some of our members had an adventurous walk across fields at Henley in Arden finishing at the ice cream parlour. We held our annual president's tea on the one sunny day in



August! Six of our members took part in and really enjoyed the federation skittles and Fish and Chip supper. To



the left, members worked on our first post box topper!

Below, we were delighted when our embroidered book entry won the Montgomery Sheild competition at the West Midland Federation A.G.M. and four of our members attended this well organised day. Pictured below right is **Louise Thornton**



receiving the Montgomery Sheild award for the beautiful embroidered sampler featured left, from award founder **Iris Montgomery** and former Federation Chair **Lynn Smith**.

Susan Palfreyman, Hockley Heath.



Judging! An occasional series. NFWI Judge, Debbie Arkinstall.

In order to give an insight into what goes into being a WI judge and what we look for when judging competitions either at National, Federation or Institute level, I felt that a series of articles might be helpful for members.



As some of you may know, in 2021, I gained my NFWI Judges Qualification and Badge, an achievement that I am very proud of considering that it was done during the Covid lockdowns. I started judging long before then as a Local Judge; a person who is considered to be very skilled in his/her particular field and for me that was crafts. I started judging at local WI and horticulture shows and enjoyed it so much that I decided to take it further and well ... here I am.

What does it take to be a judge? The most obvious is having a skill in a particular area, be it crafts, art, cookery, produce, staging and flower arranging. Within those skill areas you can start to specialise in a particular craft area. For me, it's embroidery. I do enjoy embroidery; I get a huge amount of enjoyment looking at all the different styles and forms. I also judge knitting, crotchet, felting and sewing as these were subjects that I taught in my 'day job' in Further Education.

Training takes the form of workshops and seminars. These are a requirement of the award and sometimes are done on-line, with essays/assessments and a final viva voce with the tutors. When all the assessments and paperwork are completed then you are awarded your judge's badge.

So, that is how I got here, and you now know the difference between a Local and National Judge ... and you never stop learning something new being a WI judge!

Future articles will look at schedules, judging criteria, hints and tips, and 'On with the Show'.

Debbie Arkinstall – NFWI Judge – Crafts.

Please search Facebook for
WMFWI Members Group
Contact MCSWMFWI@GMAIL.COM
for MCS enquiries

Please join this group and let's make it a useful space to share information about speakers, events, also for suggestions, ideas, discussion and queries, and for everyone to post photos and text to show other group members what you do.
This is a private group for WMFWI members only.



West Midlands Federation



The Women's Institute is here for you. It is what you make it and everything you want it to be.

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



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



Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW)

It was lovely to meet people at the Annual Meeting in Birmingham and to thank the WI members for their generous donations to ACWW.

The total received was £1,025-55

This will help by funding many Rural Women around the World to receive Education and investing in grassroot development projects to become financially independent

ACWW amplifies the voices of Rural Women so the problems they face are heard and acknowledged

These projects are all women led and include

Improving access to Water, Malawi; Climate Smart Agriculture, Ghana; Empowerment through Vocational Skill Training, Liberia; Seed grants for Sustainable Farming, India. Handloom Weaving for Sustainable Income, Uganda:

These and other Projects help nine million Rural Women. They are the backbone of families suffering the worst impact of climate change and conflict around the World

Thank you again,

Pamela (ACWW Coordinator West Midland Federation)



WMFWI Educational Trust

Would the following WI presidents please contact Treasurer Barbara Cook providing an address to which a grant of £200 can be sent. This was announced at the ACM.

Allesley Afternoon, Blackberry Belles, Dickens & Forshaw Heath, Mere Green, Monk's path, Park Hall and Quinton.

Address 10 Milverton Close Walmley Sutton Coldfield B76 1NB, telephone 07772976381, email cookk1008@gmail.com

Forthcoming Events

4 th November	Christmas Glass Mosaic
21 st November	Christmas Outing (Hyde Park)
25 th November	16 Days of Activism begins.
4 th December	Dickens & Forshaw Heath Winter Warmer
9 th December	Christmas family celebration

New Speaker Suggestions

Dalziel Ellis 1 South Parade, Harbury, Warwickshire CV33 9HZ	Home: - 01926 612326 Mobile: - 07712 673859	Her field is Poetry (fun, philosophical & thought provoking) Stand-up, stories, songs and limericks Cost: -£45:00 Expenses: - 55p per mile
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Tom Mead Email: - tomtommead@aol.co.uk	He delivers Author talks and he is a Murder/Mystery writer.
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Claire Woodland – Chair of Crafts

Hello All, as I outlined in my report at the Annual Federation Meeting, the craft committee are about to be quite busy with next year's plans. Before we get into all that lets have a look through what has happened already.

Watercolour Workshop



Dawn Statham worked extremely hard to put together an

introduction to watercolour painting for beginners. Denman tutor **Kendrick Snodin** led two sessions of basic techniques in watercolour at the BMI. The sessions were fully booked and well attended.

Members of various WIs produced their own interpretations of the same brief. It's such fun to see how everyone's creativity came out in so many different ways.

The sessions were so enjoyed by everyone, an improvers' session was requested.



Trustees' Trophy

'A Green and Pleasant Land' painting competition. We had 6 fabulous entries. The Winner was **Ruth Iles Silhill WI**, she is pictured below her art piece receiving her award from **Lynn Smith**.

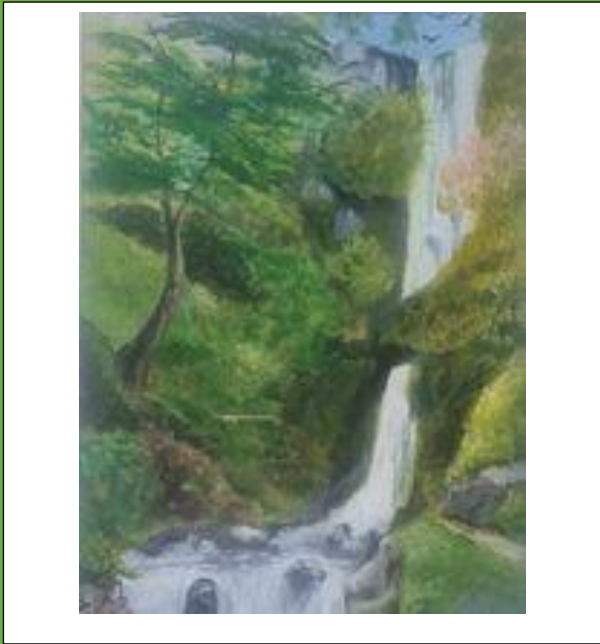


2nd Place **Katherine Shayler H O E WI**



Trustees Trophy

3rd Place Anne Glover Silhill WI



2024 Competitions

The committee have decided upon the next set of criteria for the existing competitions below. As the year unfolds there will be opportunities to enter new competitions.

Trustees Trophy

'Clean Rivers' a collage in any medium. Paper, card, textiles, tile, recycled items etc.



No larger than A2, 420 x 594mm. Must be on a firm backing (i.e. card or hardboard).

This competition has been chosen to highlight the current Resolution

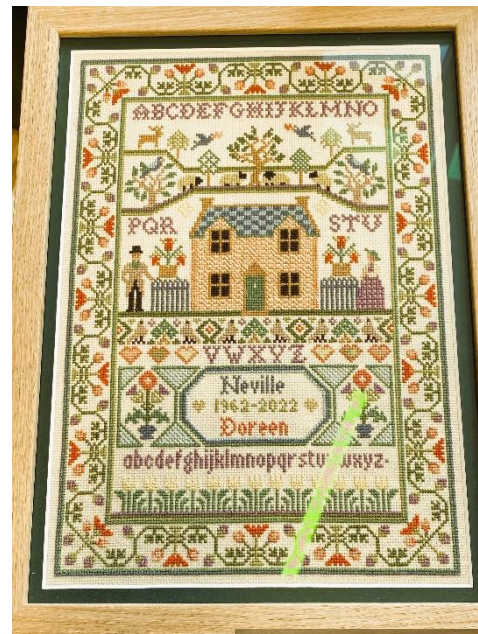
and also to make the criteria for entry accessible to all skill levels.

We hope to see an entry from each WI.

Montgomery Shield

'A Stitched Sampler' brought in 6 very different entries:

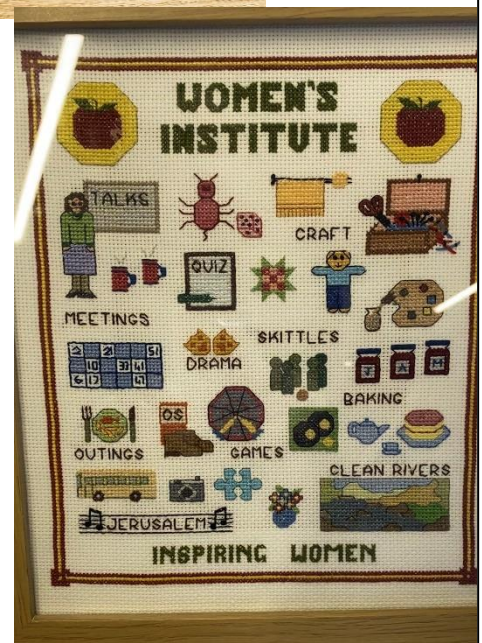
1st Place **Louise Thornton Hockley Heath WI**



Joint 2nd Place
Doreen Meacham Streetly WI



Joint 2nd Place
Christine Hadley Halesowen WI



2024 Competitions - Montgomerie Shield

'Post Box Topper'

knitted/crocheted with the theme

"Paris Olympics".



A maximum size of 60cm round to fit a standard pillar box. Your entry will need to include photographs of your entry in situ.

Further details and full criteria of all competitions will be sent out on a separate flyer. Judging will take place next October at the Annual Meeting. Judging will be anonymous so do not include any identifying marks in your designs.

Christmas Glass Mosaic Workshop



We have had a great response for this. The session is full. Photographs and results will be included in the next edition of Cog.

200 Club
Grand Prize Draw
Gillian Polashek
Mere Green WI



Trustees Challenge

Our chosen charity of 2024 is The Donkey Sanctuary.

You are being asked to knit, crochet, felt or sew stuffed toy donkeys.

The donkeys will be delivered to Sutton Park Donkey Sanctuary for sale in their headquarters at Sidmouth in Devon. All proceeds from the sale of the toy donkeys will go towards the upkeep of donkeys across the country.

The sanctuary have 3 copyright free patterns. These will be sent as a separate flyer. You can also use a pattern of your own choice if you wish, as long as the pattern owner allows the sale of the finished product.

If you have any questions about any of the competitions or challenges please get in touch.

wmfwicraft@gmail.co.uk

Claire Woodland – Chair of Craft



Corrine Brazier, Heritage Manager, from WM Police & Guest Speaker at WMFWI Conference, with her book, "A Fair Cop", celebrating 100 years of WM Policewomen.

Corrine is available as a speaker, and her book is stocked in most outlets.



No More Violence Against Women

November 25th sees the start of the annual campaign “16 days of Activism to End Gender Based Violence.”

Why 16 days? November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. It is also White Ribbon Day, a day founded by men to show their support for ending such violence, following the 1989 Montreal Massacre of 14 women. ⁽¹⁾ This runs until Human Rights Day on the 10th of December; therefore 16 days.

White Ribbon UK state that [1 in 4 girls](#) ⁽²⁾ have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school, my own daughter included, at age 12. Her school was quick to act and suspended the boy before changing his class.

At the gym [6 out of 10](#) ⁽³⁾ Women have been harassed, and [1.7million women](#) experienced domestic abuse⁽⁴⁾

Abuse may be found anywhere, and the WI, working with other organisations want to promote open dialogue about the actions needed. That starts with education and challenging behaviour when it is seen. The London Assembly have produced two powerful adverts, asking young men to check themselves, by “[Saying Maate to a Mate](#)” ⁽⁵⁾ challenging negative behaviours. Here is the link to ‘[Have a word](#)’, viewer discretion is advised due to scenes of sensitive nature. Many women will identify with the experience portrayed.

To take action, there are a number of things listed on [MyWI](#) ⁽⁵⁾ that you may do, including as simple as encouraging your WI to wear orange if the meeting is within the 16 days. Take a photo and we’ll feature it in the January issue. You could also hold a vigil, crochet orange flowers, or lobby the police.

Bonfire Night

Enjoy the occasion safely by visiting an organised event.



Friday 3rd November

Rowheath Pavilion, Bournville. B30 1HH
Fireworks & Streetfood, advance tickets only, £6
Ibiza Classics at Edgbaston Stadium, 7.30pm
Adults from £25
Halesowen Cricket Club, B63 3EG – 5.30pm – 10pm, Tickets £7.50 - 26

Saturday 4th November

Edgbaston Stadium, 7pm, Adults from £20, Children £10
Solihull Round Table Fireworks Fundraiser (Tudor Grange Park, B91 3LU) 4.30 – 9pm
Adults from £10, Children from £2

Sunday 5th November

Kings Heath Cricket Ground, B14 6DT, 5pm
Adults from £7.50 in advance, £10 on door,
Sutton Coldfield RFC, Walmley Road B76 2QA
5.30-9pm, £7.50 in advance, £10 on door,

Saturday 11th November *Kings Norton RFC,* Hopwood, B48 7BD, 5.30pm, advance tickets only, on sale till 9th November, £5.50.

References for “No More Violence”

⁽¹⁾ PolyTechnique Montreal, (2022) *Commemorative Activities*, accessed 26/10/23 <[December 6 - Polytechnique Montréal \(polymtl.ca\)](#)>

⁽²⁾ White Ribbon.org.uk, (26/10/23) *Change the Story*, accessed 26/10/23 <[White Ribbon Day 2023 — White Ribbon UK](#)>

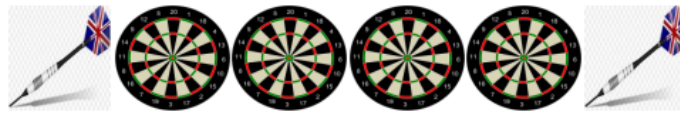
⁽³⁾ Origym (2021) *The Gym-Timidation Report*, accessed 25/10/26 <[The Gym-timidation Report: Exploring sexual harassment in the gym \(origympersonaltrainercourses.co.uk\)](#)>

⁽⁴⁾ Office for National Statistics (ONS) released 25/11/22, ONS website, *Domestic Abuse in England and Wales overview*, Nov 22, accessed 25/10/23 <[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)>

⁽⁵⁾ MyWI (Nov 2023) *No More Violence*, accessed 25/10/23 [My WI | No More Violence \(thewi.org.uk\)](#)



WEST MIDLANDS FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES



DARTS COMPETITION 2024

WANT TO HAVE FUN? TEST YOUR SKILL OR LUCK? THEN PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST IN THIS YEAR'S DARTS TOURNAMENT.

Teams of four are invited to register for this fun event, you can enter more than one team. Depending on the number of entries received the tournament will be based in local areas to reduce travelling cost.

The cost for teams is £8

THE CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES IS FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2023 WHEN THE TEAMS WILL BE DRAWN AND RULES SENT OUT.

RETURN TO; JACKIE POYNER, 97 ST DENIS ROAD, SELLY OAK BIRMINGHAM B29 4JU BY
FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2023

----- INSTITUTE WOULD LIKE TO ENTER ----- TEAMS
CHEQUE ENCLOSED FOR----- £8/PER TEAM, PAYABLE TO WMFWI.

PLEASE GIVE EMAIL ADDRESS OR ENCLOSE AN A5 SAE FOR RULES & DRAW
DETAILS

PLEASE GIVE NAME, EMAIL AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF TEAM CAPTAIN,

----- TEL. NO. -----



WMFWI ANNUAL FAMILY CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE



ST. MARTINS IN THE BULL RING

SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2023

AT 11.00 AM

This years' service will include both traditional and non-traditional festive carols and music.

Please come with your families to celebrate the joys of Christmas.

Children will be given an opportunity to write a message or prayer to hang on the Christmas tree and take a gift from it.



This year we will be joined by the Kings Heath U3A choir.



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Buy your Tickets on the door

Adults - £7

Children - £1

Refreshments after the service



West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes
Montgomery Shield 2024
Pillar box Topper – Paris Olympics



Institutes are asked to knit/crochet a pillar box topper celebrating the Paris Olympics. The topper must fit a standard round pillar box, maximum size 60cm x 60cm.

You will need to submit your topper and at least TWO photographs, showing it in pristine condition and in situ on your post box. The photographs are to be no larger than A5.

Your WI name must be removable if it appears on your topper and must not appear in any photographs submitted with your entry. Your WI name must be removed before your entry is submitted.

Judging will take place during the Annual Meeting 2024. Further instructions will be issued nearer the date.

Judging will be in accordance with knitting and crotchet found online WI On With The Show

Good luck!

.....
Entry form - Montgomery Shield 2024

Name of WI
.....

Contact email address
.....

Entry form to be submitted by June 30th 2024 to Iris Montgomery,
38 Wensley Road, Lyndon Green, B26 1LT

