



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes.



May 2024

Words from the Chair



Looking out of my window on this miserable wet and windy day reminds me of the phrase "We'll weather the weather whatever the weather may be"!!!! We do seem to be getting a lot of miserable weather. We used to get "seasons" but now we just seem to get "weather".



Lots of phrases about the weather come to mind. "March roars in like a lion and goes out like a lamb", "Never cast a clout till May be out", my grandmother always told me that the clout meant my liberty bodice and as I got older my vest but now, I call it my camisole. I have never been quite sure whether May refers to the flower or the month!!!

"March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers" Well we have definitely had wind and showers and if the plants have not drowned hopefully by the time we move towards May we will have some flowers in the garden to enjoy. Easter brought us Hot X Buns; Easter Eggs; and the clocks went forward and we are now enjoying longer days. In May we have two Bank Holidays and last year we

were all celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III.

This year we will celebrate 50 years of West Midlands Federation. We hope that many of you will join us for Afternoon Tea at the Hyatt Hotel on Thursday 27th June. So don't forget to order your tickets sooner rather than later. It will be a lovely opportunity to relax, chat with fellow members and enjoy listening to "The Goodfellow" serenade us with some well-known songs.



Best wishes to you all, Cathryn

Forthcoming Events 2024

- 31/05 - Friday Quiz - Aldridge Church Centre
- 10/06 - WMFWI member workshop with Friends of the Earth.
- 21/06 - Friday Quiz – Shirley Community Centre, 7pm
- 27/06 - WMFWI 50th Anniversary Afternoon Tea
- 28/06 - Deadline for Valerie Daggatt writing submission
- 18/07 - Croquet at Kenilworth
- 28/09 - Skittles at Hockley Heath
- 05/10 - Skittles at Aldridge
- 21/11 - Christmas at Waddesdon – explore the house and market.

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Your WI

Great Barr WI



The ladies from Great Barr WI have been busy making Lavender bags, using a variety of designs and materials, each one as individual as the ladies who made them. **Elaine Williams, Media Officer**

Olton WI



At a recent meeting of Olton WI, we had the pleasure of the Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Mrs Diana Holl-Allen MBE join us. She gave a very interesting and informative talk about her time as Mayor of Solihull and her earlier life. This is her second term of office as Mayor, the first time was in 1986-87. After her talk we enjoyed tea and cake, and a chance to chat with the mayor. Mrs Holl-Allen was delighted to win a prize in the raffle. The photo shows Mrs Diana Holl-Allen with some members of the Committee.

Janet Sharpe, Treasurer Olton WI



Bournville WI



Bournville WI welcomed a visit from Pamela Sutton, CEO of Troop Aid, and Lynn Debono, one of their supporting volunteers, to hear about the charity and their work in supporting our injured troops. They provide Grab Bags, containing basic essentials, washkit, toothpaste and brush, towel, shower mules and a change of clothes for injured troops on arrival at hospital after injury, as when they are airlifted out have nothing but the clothes they are wearing. The need was realised by three ex servicemen on a visit to the Alexandra Wing at the Queen Elizabeth hospital, who realised that far from home or their unit, they had nothing and no-one to bring immediate supplies. Troop Aid are local, and reliant on volunteers and donations, which can be made via their website: [How You Can Help • Troop Aid](https://troopaid.info), click on the hyperlink, or if you are reading this in print, search <https://troopaid.info>. They are also willing speakers for your WI meetings. Please support them if you can.

Bournville also visited Erasmus Darwin's home in Lichfield, below is the rear medicine garden.



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CHARITY NUMBER 1012552, REG. COMPANY NO. 2723008

Boldmere WI



Boldmere W.I. had their 9th Birthday Meal at the Communita Cafe on Thursday 18th April 2024.
Judy Holmes Boldmere W.I.

Balsall Heath & Moseley WI



Balsall Heath and Moseley WI had a yarn bombing workshop, where we created flowers for an art installation requested by our local Moseley Councillor. Members of all abilities took part, learning and using crochet, knitting and weaving skills in a supportive environment. We've since had a further workshop and plan more to complete the work.

Lisa Blackburn, Balsall Heath and Moseley

Newton WI



The members of Newton WI appreciated and very much enjoyed Line Dancing with **Sue Davies**, one of our members, at our meeting on Friday morning. Thank You Sue for a lovely morning, and tripping the lights fantastic. **Melanie Wisher, Newton WI**

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

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



Silhill WI



Silhill W.I. celebrated their 30th Anniversary at their April meeting. All enjoyed strawberry tarts and cakes, a picture table quiz and a horse racing game, with members taking part as jockeys. The below photo shows their first President, **Shirley Blakeman**, and current President, **Lynn Boothman**. **Heather Lewis, Silhill WI.**



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

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

Next deadline: 18/05/24

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*

Four Oaks WI



Pictured above are some of the ladies belonging to Four Oaks WI's knitting group. They used the Annual General Meeting to showcase their work for three charities. The colourful display included the teddy bears knitted for children in refuges, for women fleeing domestic violence, as well as hedgehogs. These along with blankets, baby cardigans and hats are all for the Linus project. Linus provides support to children who are sick, disabled, disadvantaged or distressed.



The premature baby unit also appreciates the hats and baby clothes our ladies knit. **Sue Richards, Programme Secretary, Four Oaks W.I**

200 Club £10 Winner

**Diane Johnson,
of Mere Green WI.**

Editor's Pick #1 - No Mow May

♪ "Please, please, don't [mow] the daisies!
Don't [mow] the daisies, please, please." ♪

Let's credit Doris Day and try and save them for those who really do like to 'eat' them. It's World Bee Day on May 20th, save your back, fuel, and the bees, and your lawn will look lovely for it. 🐝

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Upcoming Events from The Arts & Activities Group



Friday 31st May 2024

Aldridge Church Centre,

14 The Green, Aldridge, WS9 8NH

Closing date Friday 10th May. Cost £24.00 for Teams of 4



Friday 21st June 2024

Shirley Community Centre,

Stratford Road, Shirley, B90 3AD

Closing date Friday 31st May, Cost £24.00 for Teams of 4

Afternoon Tea Celebrating WMFWI 50th Anniversary

Thursday 27th June 2024, 2- 4pm

Hyatt Hotel, Bridge Street B1 2JZ

Closing Date 24th May, Cost £20 per person



Valerie Daggatt Cup for Creative Writing 2024

Members are invited to submit a piece of writing (no more than 1,000 words) in any style including a story or poem.

The subject for this year is "Inspiration"

Closing date for entries Friday 28th June



Thursday 18th July 2024. Cost £12/person

Croquet at Kenilworth Lawn Tennis Club

Crackley Lane, CV8 2JS

Details coming soon





Skittles at Hockley Heath Saturday 28th September, with fish and chip supper

Skittles at Aldridge Church Centre Saturday 5th October with fish and chip supper

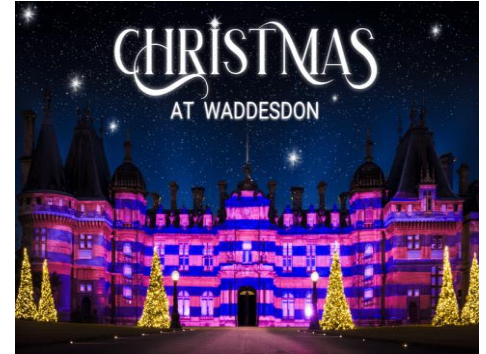
Thursday 21st November 2024.

Opportunity to explore the house and visit the Christmas Market.

For more information on any of these events please contact

Jackie Poyner; 07503095852.

jackie.poyner@btopenworld.com



Editor's Pick #2: Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week runs from 13 – 19th May 2024, and this year the theme is “Movement; moving more for our Mental Health”

Taking time to look after yourself is important; the daily stresses of work, money, health, caring, and other responsibilities can all feel overwhelming, especially when they accumulate from different sources in a short frame of time. It might seem counter intuitive to take a break when there is so much to do, but your mind and your body will function better for a short period of calm or mindful movement.

As part of the annual campaign, the WI have **Me, Myself & WI Week**; give yourself a mindful break, with one of several courses offered from Denman at home, at [Live Courses - WI Learning Hub \(thewi.org.uk\)](https://www.thewi.org.uk). There are activities possible for all abilities, such as Chair Yoga & Pilates. If you're able, a walk through the park, or around the block, might help to empty your mind. The activity will help to lower your stress hormones of cortisol and adrenaline, whilst boosting your mood enhancers of endorphins. If guilt is haranguing you for taking some time to yourself, give your movement a purpose, a walk through the park, perhaps to the library, or to a coffee shop, to the post office. Remember to empty your mind, and take in only what you see around you; the trees, the grass, the flowers, the people. Leave the cares behind, and approach them when relaxed.



We talk a lot of how pressure & overwhelm can affect us, but let us not forget how when all that has gone; relationship loss, children flown the nest, not in work, the 'emptiness' also has an impact. Once again, movement may be a key. It opens paths to meeting people via dog walks, gym and dance classes, guerilla gardening (no May mowing please!) walking groups or just to that coffee shop. More information, and mindful activities are available at [My WI | Home \(thewi.org.uk\)](https://www.thewi.org.uk). Mental health information is available at [Mental Health Awareness Week | Mental Health Foundation](https://www.mentalhealthfoundation.org.uk). **If you are struggling, please speak to your GP and seek support.** How will your WI move to benefit your health this month? Send your pics!

