



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes.



Words from the Chair

June 2025

I have to start this month's article with a huge thank you and congratulations to Claire Woodland and Dawn Statham for all the hard work, time and effort they put into making the 2025 County Show at Aldridge Church Centre such a great success. The theme was Alice in Wonderland and members put together some brilliant entries for the various categories of competitions included in the schedule.

I have to also thank those of you that helped out on the day, be it logging the numerous competition entries, serving refreshments or any of the other jobs that went into making the day so successful. I hope that those of you that came along, enjoyed it as much as I did. It was great to meet up with so many of you and chat! A reminder that there are several other events fast approaching; Shirley Quiz (Friday 4th July), Valerie Daggatt writing competition (closing date Friday 27th June) and Croquet at Kenilworth (Thursday 10th July). There is still the opportunity to book for the other events listed, details are with your secretaries. Please come along and support these events. Remember we are always looking for volunteers to help out at these and future events, if you're able to offer any help or would consider joining one of the sub - committees please contact me on; jackiewmfwi@gmail.com

I can't believe that I am mentioning Christmas in May /June but tickets are selling fast for this year's Christmas trip to the Rep Theatre to see Sherlock Homes and the Twelve Days of Christmas, again details and booking information is with your secretaries. Sadly we won't be holding the Christmas Celebration event at St Martin's in the Bull Ring this year.

Finally if any of you have completed sewn squares designed as part of the WMF 50th Anniversary celebrations to be included in the wall hanging , you can bring them along to one of the events listed above or post them to the Office – 95 Spencer Street, B18 6DA.

Thank you to those of you that have already sent them in.

Best Wishes,

Jackie Poyner, Federation Chair.



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Forthcoming events

04/06/25 - National Federation Annual Meeting.
26/06/25 - Valerie Daggatt Cup Submission Deadline.
04/07/25 - Shirley Evening Quiz (Stratford Rd).
10/07/25 - Lawn Croquet at Kenilworth.
04/10/25 - West Midlands Federation Annual Meeting.
03/12/25 - Sherlock Holmes at Birmingham Rep.

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



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



Hobbs Moat WI



In April, 17 Members of Hobs Moat WI applied for the educational grant to visit Bletchley Park. A very interesting and informative day was had, learning how code breakers deciphered enemy secret messages during WW2. Britain's best kept secret is now a heritage attraction, which is well worth a visit.



Above: Hobs Moat WI took part in the first Judy Masson Rummikub Trophy. It was an enjoyable afternoon with good friends, laughter and strategies.



The winner was Rose Wyton, Hobbs Moat Treasurer, (left).

Pamela Blattner

Rose being presented with the trophy by president Landa Dance.



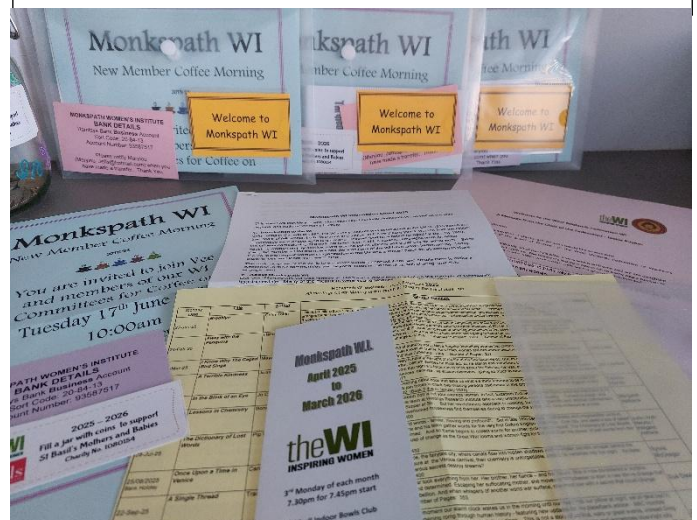
Monkspath WI

New Member Packs

Monkspath WI has had many new members over the past several years we worried that these newer members would have a harder time feeling at home now that we have grown into a much larger group (60 members currently).

We formed a New Member Committee to discuss various options and developed our New Member Pack. This pack contains an invitation to a special Coffee Morning, copy of our Programme, copy of our Monkspath WI Member information sheet, copy of Jackie Poyner's 'Welcome to the WMFWI' letter, list of book selections for our book club, details of our bank account for online payments, and a Jam Jar label for our charity coin collection (see accompanying photo). The New Member coffee morning will be hosted at our President's home several times a year and will allow new members to get to know each other and committee members in a small group environment.

If any other WI's would like more information about our New Member Pack or our Information Sheet, please contact Marylou Jeffs (Marylou_Jeffs@hotmail.com)



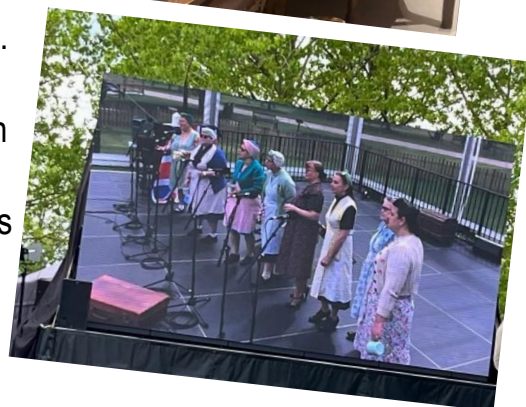
Victory Belles – VE Day



Victory Belles were invited to perform at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th May to celebrate and commemorate VE Day.

We sang, and danced a selection of wartime tunes in Heroes Square, and also on the main stage. We had the great honour of singing to WWII veterans, and to members of the public. There is a mock-up of a street party in the museum for the next several weeks, if you visit you can hear us singing celebratory songs in the background. We even featured on Central News. The whole project has been so much fun, we feel very proud to have represented our wartime counterparts on behalf of the WI.

Claire Woodland.



Balsall Heath & Moseley WI



BH&M held a "Drum N Bounce" Session, a unique fitness class set to the sound of Drum n Bass, with DJ & Fitness Instructor Sister Smalls (Emma Smallman). After indulging in WI cake, it was followed by a session of chair yoga. DJ Sister Smalls, is also a trauma informed Yoga Teacher, in addition to her DJ slot on Brum Radio (Thursdays, 8pm). She and former president Helen had spent the day before taking part in a 'bouncathon'; five hours of aerobic drum and bounce at New Street Station, as part of Mental Health Week, to support Birmingham Mind.



BH&M have been requested by Moseley in Bloom to create the bunting to decorate their open gardens this year. We met at our local coffee house for a planning and progress meeting, pictured are Jen & Lesley. If you have never visited Moseley Open Gardens, it really is a fantastic day out, with approximately eighteen gardens to visit of varying sizes. To find out more, visit the link below:

[Open Gardens 2025 – Moseley in Bloom](#)



Bournville WI



Bournville WI held their AGM with a celebration of VE day, accompanied by music from Vera Lynn and other forties favourites, a ploughman's lunch was enjoyed by all.



Pat Finney was awarded the prize for being the greatest competition winner of 2024/5. Her advice was along the lines of "be in it to win it".



Bouquets were given to retiring committee members, treasurer Janice Williams, and competitions organiser Wendy Morgan, from the committee, pictured below. **Lisa Blackburn**



Boldmere WI



Boldmere W.I. had a lovely day at the County Show in Aldridge. Above is Boldmere's stall with Sandra Atkins, in front, Patricia Platt, Brenda Whitfield, Judy Holmes and Dee Harrington.



We were lucky enough to win the Showcase Trophy, the pictured above. The winning team is pictured below: Mags Rea, Sandra Atkins, Judy Holmes, Brenda Whitfield, Janet Sutton, and our Federation President, Jackie Poyner.

Judy Holmes, Boldmere WI



Knowle WI



Knowle WI celebrated VE day with a picnic in the park. **Stephanie Withers**

Walsall Wood



Walsall Wood WI held a bottle stall at the County Show on 10th May. "From Shampoo to Champagne" was our logo. Everyone who took part won a prize and we had run out of bottles by lunchtime. The money raised boosted our funds and will be used to benefit our members later in the year. What a fantastic day we had. Meeting members from other groups, buying lovely things and eating delicious food. In the photos are; Carol Cain, Judi Harris, Elaine Homes, Judy Cross, Barbara Grant, Susan Swallow, Libby Grice, Jean King

Sue Laws, President Walsall Wood WI



Hockley Heath WI



This month members have been busy with selling plants that we have grown, also decorating the Hockley Heath Village Planter for VE Day. Sue Palfreyman is blending in with

the planter. Our knitted Maypole Post Box Topper has been expertly placed by Jackie Mellows after hours spent at home and at our knit and natter group, knitting the figures to display to the village for Spring.

Pat Rhodes

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: 15/06/25

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.**

Silhill WI



Featured is our outgoing President Lynn Boothman presenting **Gabriele Gardner** with The Margaret Williams Cup for exceptional services to the Institute.

Gabriele has been our refreshment organiser since 2008. Since that time, she has presided over countless socials, Institute anniversaries and celebrations for national events such as the late Queen's Jubilee and the King's Coronation, not to mention our regular monthly meetings. Her meticulous attention to every detail, her added touches of flowers and decorations, her own cooking and management of the Committee's contributions has been second to none. She has worked tirelessly for us even though she often has to fight through pain (her determination and dedication is stronger than her body).

She is a wonderful member of Silhill W.I. and so much appreciated. She truly deserves this accolade. **Heather Lewis**

Berkswell WI



This is the Berkswell WI flower arrangement displayed in Berkswell Church to celebrate VE Day.

Pamela Griffiths. President



Boldmere WI



Boldmere W.I. celebrated ten years in April. Members visited Aston Wood Golf Club for a meal, enjoying drinks on arrival. We were joined by some members of Mere Green, Walmley and Erdington. Ginny read out a lovely poem she had written.

We had a cake which was cut at our next meeting so members who could not come were included.



President Cathy Green cutting the cake with Treasurer Lynda Morris and Secretary Patricia Platt.

Judy Holmes, Boldmere W.I.



Four Oaks WI



Four Oaks took part in an Indian Dance Lesson, and listened to Dishy Attwood's talk "My Mother's Journey from India". Dishy described her mother Sarjit's experience at partition, hidden by her Sikh family after her father left them for America. He sent money for Sarjit but his estranged wife kept it Sarjit was kept illiterate as educated girls were perceived to run away, she ground flour, carried water and picked cotton.

At 17, she had an arranged marriage with a dowry of gold brought upon a camel, but her in laws treated her as a slave and Sarjit saw nothing of the dowry, bearing three children of which Dishy was the youngest. Dishy's father, a farmer, emigrated to work in a Coventry foundry, sending money back to the family for farm machinery. They joined him for his son to receive an education. He was upset at his wife's treatment in India and berated his family, but in Coventry Sarjit was called upon to cook meals for his friend at short notice.

On his death, Sarjit had a breakdown but her children became her focus, deciding their careers: Dishy would become a teacher.

Sikh widows wore pale colours. Sarjit taught herself English, catering at the temple. At her funeral in 2020 many spoke of her gift with drawing people to her, demonstrated when actress Brigitte Nielsen suddenly hugged her at an event they were both attending. Others spoke of how she had counselled them and gave them financial support.

Despite all that her mother had experienced, she was very grateful for the life she had lived and never complained. **Sue Richards**



Halesowen WI – VE Day Celebration

It was a very busy May meeting for Halesowen WI. Along with holding our AGM, we were visited by Home Run Hounds, a charity that supports and homes ex racing greyhounds. We also celebrated VE day at our meeting with many members dressing for the occasion.

Our celebrations consisted of slide presentation of photos of members relatives during the war and celebrating VE Day itself, along with nostalgic music from the time. Members brought in memorabilia from the era for all to see and we provided a feast of fish paste sandwiches, lemon curd tarts, jam tarts, syrup cake, the WI VE day celebration cake baked by one of our members, and traditional lemonade.

Members wore both stylish and practical attire from the 1940's.



Right: Our member Denise, getting to know one of the greyhounds.



You can find out more about the Greyhound rescue here:

[ABOUT US | Home Run Hounds](#)

Lorraine Legge, President



WMFWI Quiz Evening

QUIZ!

On Friday 4th July 2025 at 7pm
At

Shirley Community Centre
Stratford Road, Shirley B90 3AD
(parking available)

Each team to consist of up to four members
from your WI

(each WI may enter more than one team)

Cost £24.00 (+ booking fee) per table
to include coffee/tea and cakes.

(Supporters welcome at a cost of £4.00 on the
door) Closing date: Friday 20 June.

Book on TicketLab @ <https://ticketlab.co.uk>
(One person to book for each table of four)

WMFWI – Theatre Visit



“This world premier comedy whodunnit is penned
by Fringe-favourites and comic geniuses, The
Penny Dreadful with brand new songs by legendary
musical theatre duo Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd
Webber” (Quotation: Birmingham Rep)

40 seats are reserved for a matinee performance of
Sherlock Holmes at the Birmingham Rep.

Wednesday 3rd December at 3pm.

Seats are in centre stalls, and are priced at £40,
booking fee included.

Book and pay by 1st September 2025,
no exceptions; the booking will lapse after this
date. Book on ticketlab@<https://ticketlab.co.uk>

WMFWI

CROQUET

Thursday 10th July 2025

At Kenilworth Lawn Tennis Club
Crackley Lane, Kenilworth, CV8 2JS

The Cost is £12 / person and includes tuition,
equipment, and tea/coffee and biscuits.

Please wear flat shoes and bring suitable wet
weather clothing in case of inclement weather

Please arrive at 1.30pm as
play starts promptly at 1.45pm.

If you have booked a place but are unable to
attend on the day please contact

Jackie Poyner on 07503 085852

Closing date Monday June 30th 2025

As there is only one date, there will be a draw
if over-subscribed.

Please return the slip below including the
names of all players to

Liz Galloway at 103 Middleton Hall Road,
Birmingham, B30 1AG

Reference: (bank transfers) “Croquet”
Sort code: 30-97-78 A/C No: 02011724

I requireplace/s to play croquet

Treasurer's name:WI:.....

Tel:.....Email:.....

Please list names of all players:

.....

**May 2025 - 200 Club
£10 Winner - number 12.
Hilary Foulds of Four Oaks**





51ST ANNUAL MEETING

**at the
Hyatt Regency Hotel
2 Bridge Street, Birmingham B1 2JZ**

On Saturday 4th October 2025

I would like to extend a cordial welcome to all members to join us at this event.

It is hoped that all WIs will send one member as a Delegate and that other members will attend as Observers. The cost of the day will be £12 per person, plus a small booking fee and tickets are easily booked on TicketLab. Delegates will have the cost defrayed from their WI funds.

This invitation is to all WI members and not just Committee members. The room seats 150 and we will hold a ballot if over-subscribed but all WIs who apply for tickets will have a representative attending.

The day will begin with coffee and pastries from 9.30am and a chance to chat with friends. The morning session will start at 10.30am and include a short session on business, followed by the inspiring activist and speaker Sarah P. Corbett, founder of the Craftivist Collective.

Lunch will not be provided as there are many opportunities to find lunch nearby.

In the afternoon, certificates will be awarded and we shall hear from Dr Sarah Hussein, Author and Educator, whose book celebrates the women who raised awareness of environmental damage in India in the 20th century.

The Board of Trustees looks forward to welcoming you to the 51st Annual meeting and inviting you to book your ticket @ <https://ticketlab.co.uk>. Please click on 'Find an event' and enter '51st Annual Meeting' to reach the booking page.

Jackie Poyner

Chair, West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes

