



# Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes.



December 2023

## Words from the Chair



Hello Everyone,



As I am writing this article, I am sitting watching it pouring down with rain and wondering will it ever stop? We do not seem to have "Seasons" anymore just "Weather"!!!

I think that the WI is similar to the weather, always with us and continually changing with the times as it has done since its inception in 1897.

There are lots of books that have been written about the Women's Institute: Jam and Jerusalem, Extraordinary Women and Bows of Burning Gold to name but a few and the latter was written by Helen Carey, a past Chairperson of NFWI.

In Bows of Burning Gold there is reference to two WIs in the West Midlands Federation. In 1923 it was suggested to Solihull WI that it joined the Solihull Poultry Society at a cost of five shillings a year. Members would be entitled to buy wire netting, chicken food and eggs for hatching at a reduced cost!!!

More recently in 2003, Bournville WI alerted Federation to the EU proposal to abolish the British hallmark.

Eighty years between those two events and both WIs are still going strong today. I wonder how many other WIs have interesting facts tucked away? Well, it's still raining and there seems to be no sign of it stopping any time soon. The days are getting shorter and with the Fireworks lighting up the sky for Guy Fawkes Night and Diwali we all know that Christmas is just around the corner.



May I take this opportunity on behalf of myself and the Board of Trustees to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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## Your WI

### Mere Green WI



Thinking about the WI's Clean Rivers campaign Mere Green WI decided to find out about the cleanliness of their local river Tame. On 18th October they had a guided tour of one of Europe's largest water treatment sites; Severn Trent at Kingsbury.

The tour began with raw sewage and finished at large tanks of clean water before the final destination of the river Tame. Enroute the guide took us past a large pit full of fat, a reminder not to put any fat down the sink. We also saw a large container of rags, the remnants of supposedly biodegradable wipes; "no such thing" quoted our guide, as he emphasised **not to put any wipes down the loo!** A very interesting and educational visit.

**Sue Phillips, Mere Green WI**

**200 Club Winner**  
**Jackie Poyner**  
**Bournville WI**



## Berkswell WI



Berkswell WI held an evening with Will Farmer from the Antiques Road Show with a talk about iconic items sold at auction from Hollywood films: "Hooray for Hollywood!" A wonderful evening enjoyed by all!  
Photo left to right, Pamela Griffiths, Will Farmer and Innes Brett.

**Pamela Griffiths, President Berkswell WI**

### Great Barr WI



This month the ladies from Great Barr W.I. had a session of making Christmas cards, the designs were varied and all were very well made. The ladies are always willing to try their hand at new crafts and as always have a lot of fun and banter.

**Elaine Williams, Media Officer**

## Streetly WI



Streetly Evening WI members wore pink to their October meeting in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness month. Facts and myths about breast cancer were discussed. It also served to highlight the importance of self-checking for signs of anything abnormal whatever your age, the key being TLC (Touch, Look, and Consult). **Nola Boulger Streetly WI**

## Silhill WI



"Silhill W.I. wore orange clothing and brought orange items to display at our meeting to show solidarity with the **No Violence Against Women** campaign. Members are also making flowers to display at The Core Library in Solihull during the sixteen days of activism. **Heather Lewis (Secretary) Silhill WI**



## Kingswinford WI



Kingswinford WIs knit and natter group have been incredibly busy for months knitting and crocheting hundreds of poppies, and the finished result now adorns the Kingswinford British Legion with pride. This was our first large community project and we hope we have created a fitting commemoration to the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces – Lest We Forget.

**Helen Potter,**  
**Kingswinford WI**



## Forthcoming Events

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 30 <sup>th</sup> November | Women in Politics Event,<br>Colmore Row (see page 6) |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> December  | Dickens & Forshaw Heath<br>Winter Warmer             |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> December  | Christmas family celebration                         |

## Solihull WI



The speaker we had booked for our 31st October meeting cancelled and in her place one of our members, Dorothy Clark, agreed to tell us about her time in the WAAF during WW2.

In 1942, aged nineteen, she volunteered to join. After initial tough training she was taught to drive a variety of vehicles in Cardington and became a heavy vehicle driver, a job which she really enjoyed. Posted in the Balloon Squadron, in various locations, Dorothy regaled us with tales of those times however harsh and dangerous they were. Towards the end of the war she was moved to Mepal, near Ely, where she met her future husband, an officer in the RAF and was demobbed from there in 1945. A few days after Dorothy's talk we surprised her with a celebration of her 100th birthday! Dorothy has been a member of Solihull W I for 32 years and is an inspiration to us all.

**Jean Jones, President Solihull WI**

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



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



## Hockley Heath WI



This month our ladies have been busy crafting!



Our knit and natter group have been working on poppies and decorations for our sponsored

planter and post box topper in the village. At the November meeting we made



Christmas bunting and snow jars. Members are looking forward to a meal for our 98th birthday celebration at a local restaurant.



**Susan Palfreeman Hockley Heath WI**



## Moseley & Balsall Heath WI



**Aline Boblin**, CEO and founder of Menopause Knowledge CIC gave BH&M members an enlightening talk challenging the knowledge and misconceptions around menopause. She explained a holistic approach, from peri to post menopause, to manage symptoms and long-term health. She shared her own experience of menopause, and discussed evidence-based research, recognising that many people seek support from GPs who have limited understanding. Aline is contactable at

[Home - Menopause Knowledge](#)

and is available to talk to your WI. She is pictured below left, with right, BH&M president, Helen Coulthard.

**Lisa Blackburn, BH&M WI**



## Hawne WI



Hawne WI  
at  
St John's Church, Halasowen

Christmas Tree Festival  
and Yarn Bombing

2nd to 23rd December

Events - each Saturday from 10.30am

2nd: Halas Homes sing & sign choir  
9th: Children's craft activities & Bug Strummers Ukulele group  
16th: Carols around the piano  
23rd: Christmas Organ recital

Traidpoint Cafe & Shop open  
excluding Sunday

Wednesday & Friday: 10.00am - 12.00noon  
Saturday & Sunday: 10.30m - 3.00pm

## Would you like to see your WI featured here?



Send your contributions to  
[COGMEDIAWMFWI@gmail.com](mailto:COGMEDIAWMFWI@gmail.com)



Next deadline: 10/12/23.

Please send submissions by the tenth of each month to guarantee 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 and documents as word documents. *Lisa Blackburn, Editor.*

"Merry Christmas & Season's Greetings"



## West Midlands Federation



The Women's Institute is here for you. It is what you make it and everything you want it to be. Please search Facebook for WMFWI Members Facebook Group. Please join. This is a private group for WMFWI members to post in only.

## Why women should consider a career in politics

Join us for an evening bringing together women interested in politics from across the West Midlands. You will have the chance to hear the stories of women MPs and councillors and network whilst considering your own political future.

The event will be hosted by Helen Pankhurst with cross party speakers sharing their political journeys. Refreshments will be served.

### Speakers include:

Suzanne Webb MP, Conservative,  
Paulette Hamilton MP, Labour  
Councillor Morriam Jan, Liberal Democrat



### Event details

Thursday 30th November 2023,  
6:00 - 8:00pm

The collaboration space,  
Shakespeare Martineau,  
1 Colmore Square, Birmingham B4 6AA

Book your space by emailing  
[speight@careinternational.org](mailto:speight@careinternational.org)



**NFWI** have asked us to promote this local event to encourage more women into politics.

Helen Pankhurst is the great granddaughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, Suffragette.



## Judging! An occasional series, by Debbie Arkinstall



This month – **ON WITH THE SHOW.**

In the past many of you will have seen references to “On With The Show” when looking at the competition guidelines for our two craft competitions. The reason for including this, is that this is the most important handbook for judges when judging competitions.

It is divided into the following sections: -

**Organising a show**, and includes information about the show committee; what needs to be done, who does what, financial checklist, checklist for Show Committees etc.

**Judging a Show**, this is the most important section for us as judges. It includes Roles and Responsibilities. What happens before we turn up to judge, essential equipment, plus specifics e.g., have I got my magnifying glass and a piece of dark fabric?\*

It considers responsibilities at the Show and what should happen after.

**Finding a Winner**, this part is important for show entrants, this section contains useful information for judges and entrants for specific crafts. For example;

Canvaswork, are kits allowed? If so, it should be stated, with credit given for an original design. Mounted and/or framed? Does the work have to be done on traditional canvas or can any grid be used? Definitions are provided as well, e.g.

Canvaswork: Any stitchery or applied work on canvas (whether of man-made or natural fibres).

Tapestry: A woven fabric, this is sometimes used commercially to describe a canvaswork kit.

There's a lot more for judges to bear in mind when judging crafts and art in all its forms. So, if you are recommended by the schedule to look at “On with the Show” it's there for a good reason, after all no one wants to see NAS (Not as Schedule) on their comment card!

\*The dark fabric? – I use this when judging lace and tatting, the work shows up beautifully against a dark fabric. **Debbie Arkinstall – NFWI Judge – Crafts.**



**Trustee's Trophy.** Last month, we inadvertently printed Silhill's representative's picture (which was a lovely photo) instead of the actual winner's photo. Here left, is Ruth Isles, first prize winner, with her beautiful artwork and prizes. Apologies to you, Ruth. Also, we listed Anne Glover in third place, when Anne was fourth and Pat King of Newton WI third. In addition, the **Montgomery Sheild** second prize was won by Felicity Bennett, of Newton WI, not Christine Hadley. Apologies and congratulations to all winners and participants, please forgive us! *Editor*



## Clare Woodland – Chair of Crafts

Hello All,

Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat. He's not the only one either, with darker nights and cooler temperatures, I'm finding myself settled on the sofa more, and crafting away. I'm sure you're all getting busy with Christmas crafts, we would love to see your makes.

Our new competitions have been well received, hopefully we will see a bumper amount of entries at next year's annual meeting.

There was a printing error in last month's Cog, a picture of Ann Dixon was featured as an addition to the pictures supplied, Ann was wrongly represented as second place Katherine Shayler.

### Trustees Challenge



We have already received our first crocheted donkeys for the Trustees Challenge, made by Kim Slivinski. They really are lovely little toys; Kim has made an excellent job of putting them together.



Patterns may be found with the flyers of October's Cog, or on the WMFWI members' Facebook page.

### Christmas Glass Mosaic Workshop



Eighteen members attended the class at Curborough Countryside Centre in Lichfield for the last of this year's glass workshops.

Some creations were traditional, others more contemporary. We all had a fabulous couple of hours, and took home our trees to grout them.



We will be taking bookings shortly for a traditional stained-glass workshop in February, watch this space.



## County Show

We have some very exciting news for 2024. West Midlands Federation will be holding an annual County Show. The Craft Committee felt we had lost far too many of our traditional ways in WI, hopefully this new show will help to redress the balance.

### Save the date

**WMFWI** invites all WIs to attend our inaugural County Show on **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024** at **Bromwich Hall**, Hall Green Road, West Bromwich B71 2EA



The Hall is a 13<sup>th</sup> century manor house, complete with a moat, and resident ghosts.

### Showcase

Each WI is encouraged to set up a stand in the grounds. We would recommend you beg, borrow, or steal a small gazebo. The purpose of this is to showcase your WI.

You should design and decorate your space to reflect the activities and ethos of your WI. The show is open to the public, a perfect opportunity to recruit new members. You can also use the space to raise funds for your WI.

Guidelines for your allocated space and further information will be outlined in a document to be sent to your secretary. You are only limited by your own imagination. We hope you choose to make the most of this opportunity.

## Competitions

There will be a host of competitions for you to enter either as individuals or as a combined entry. This will include Baking, Preserving, Painting/Drawing, Photography, Floristry, Fabric Crafts, and Yarn Crafts.

Expert judges will be drafted in from other counties. Standards will be as set out in 'On with the Show'; available to download from NFWI.

### Taster Sessions

Expert crafters will be offering timed slots for individuals to learn a new craft. Amongst the list of experts will be some heritage craft too. Some of our crafts have become endangered, we aim to change that.

We will be offering Make and Take, all materials provided.

### Event

The event will be a fabulous day of crafting, competitions, awards, socialising, recruiting, fundraising, and networking.

Bromwich Hall is the meeting space of Victory Belles WI. As the hosts they will be running the kitchen, providing refreshments to all attendees, and fundraising for their own activities.

### Success

The event will only be as good as its supporters, we are relying on you joining in. We are expecting representatives of every WI in the West Midlands. If your WI needs support, please feel free to contact us.

**Claire Woodland, Chair of Crafts**

**[wmfwicraft@gmail.co.uk](mailto:wmfwicraft@gmail.co.uk)**



**WMFWI ANNUAL FAMILY CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE**

**ST MARTINS IN THE BULL RING**

**SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2023 11-12 noon**

This year's 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.

Tickets available on the door: Adults - £7, Children - £1.

Refreshments after the service.



**DARTS TOURNAMENT 2024**



**DARTS COMPETITION 2024**

**Teams of four are invited to register for this fun event, you can enter more than one team**

**Cost per team is £8.**

**Closing date for registration is Friday 8th December 2023**

**Entries to; Jackie Poyner, 97 St Denis Road Selly Oak Birmingham B29 4JU**



Looking for a Christmas gift for a friend this year?



Why not buy them a stake in

# the 200 Club



Shares cost £5.00 each and the monthly winner will receive £10.00 per draw.

At the year end the minimum prize will be £100, so the more shares bought, the higher the prize. The 200 Lottery Grand Draw will take place at the Annual Meeting 2024.

Application form together with a **stamped addressed envelope** and **cheque** should be made payable to **WMFVI** and sent to:

WMFVI Federation Treasurer, Liz Galloway,

At 103 Middleton Hall Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham B30 1AG.

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## 200 CLUB 2023/4 Application Form

I wish to purchase on behalf of (NAME).....

Number of shares ..... at £5.00 each (Valid for one year to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024)

Cheque enclosed for £..... please enclose a **stamped addressed envelope**

Signed .....

*(Further forms are available from Liz Galloway)*



# 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 in the WI "On With The Show"

Good Luck

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### Entry form - Montgomery Shield 2024

Name of

WI.....

Contact email address

.....

Entry form to be submitted by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2024 to Iris Montgomery,

38 Wensley Road, Lyndon Green, B26 1LT

