

Annual Meeting 2024—Royal Albert Hall London



Thanks all for a great event!

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Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of Women's Institutes

incorporated in England and Wales as a Company limited by Guarantee No. 02769771 Charity Reg No. 1016 766

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From the Board

We took 52 members on the coach to the Royal Albert Hall in London for the Annual Meeting 2024. We all had a fantastic time, with a lovely coach driver Jacob and an uneventful journey. Some members went to see a West End show with Sister Act, Moulin Rouge and Wicked not far away. Leicester Ladies walked across the roof of the O2! We enjoyed good food and the company of many other WI members from Northumberland to Cornwall. We claimed every street, seat and café!



The Chair Ann Jones said we had 24,000 new members in the last year that is 66 per day in 'our strongest period of recruitment'. There is an increased presence at national and local events, we have doubled the WIs in prisons, launched a new podcast with 3000 listeners and new WI Adviser training modules. The February formal constitution review plans to make running WIs easier and for the WI to be the organisation of choice for all women by increasing inclusivity. NFWI have opened their second charity shop in partnership with Relate. Since the recent Learning Hub launch they have had 3884 learners per month. In September there will be a NFWI Lottery launched.

The speakers were fantastic, Nazir Afzal OBE received a standing ovation and was so inspiring in discussing his work as a prosecutor to seek justice. Mel B from the Spice Girls spoke to Victoria Derbyshire about coercive control. Women's Aid and The Archers spoke about the storylines which have helped increase awareness and support around domestic abuse.



The NFWI Chair Ann Jones has stepped down to be replaced by Jeryl Stone from Warwickshire. The Dental Health Matters resolution was voted in favour, so more information will follow about how WIs can help. Most importantly, we all bonded across WIs. A special thank you to all who attended.

As you may know the Annual Meeting will be online for the next 2 years however we have plans to hold our own Annual Meeting event to open the experience up to WI members who'd like to attend.

Some feedback from the weekend

- Just to say, I had the most fabulous day at RAH. Fabulous speakers. The sun shone on us at lunchtime. Thank you sooooo much. Liliane Coogan, Wakerley & Barrowden
- Thank you all for the great visit and the best National Meeting - speakers with standing applause. Marion Heywood, Humberstone Heights & Belgrave
- Thank you for being a wonderful leader on our recent London AGM trip . We all had a fabulous time . Sarah Mann, Countesthorpe
- This was my first Annual meeting – great! What a shame they are only going to be every three years from now. Thanks for everything. Lorna Williams, QE
- The speakers have certainly given us much to discuss. Hopefully we will be there at the next one in 2 years time. Kay Drake, Wymondham
- Thank you for all the time and effort organising the 2 days. The conference was amazing—I had a brilliant time. Thank you, Sue Black, Kirby Muxloe
- Thank you so much for all your hard work in preparation for and management of the Federation's participation in the annual meeting. You did an amazing job! I was an annual meeting virgin and thought the whole experience was fantastic - I would recommend it to all other WI members. Jackie Cooper, Oakham
- You did a great job of organising what quite often turns into chaos! Well done. Teresa Welland, Leicester Ladies

From the House

On a tour of Charnwood it was great to see the poster out on pinboards in your local communities. It is excellent to hear from WIs wanting to collect more promotional items. We have

- Large Pull Up Banners
- Pop up Banners—large and table top
- Display boards
- Catering equipment
- Projector and screen
- Posters, A5 leaflets, Membership info and copies of WI Life

Just call or email when you'd like to come in and what you need and we'll try our best to get the materials ready for you. If you would like any help from the Membership Committee we can advise by phone or attend if they are free.

General updates from WI House

1. Our feedback policy has been updated since we had our Have Your Say meetings—this will be available on our website soon.
2. If you didn't get a chance to attend a Have Your Say meeting we can send you a survey—do call 0116 2661342—deadline for responses is 30th June. A full report will be compiled after the survey results are collated.
3. Save the date! Sat 29th March 2025, LRFWI Annual Council Meeting, Leicester Grammar School, Great Glen. More information to follow on speakers and more.

Thanks for all your queries and support. Sandra Woodward, Federation Secretary



Membership Committee

Committee Members past, present and future. We know how difficult some WIs are finding it to recruit Committee Members so we are holding an informal session on 14th September 11-1 at WI House for anyone to come along and find out more. What being on a Committee involves, what your responsibilities are, and how much time is involved. All this with no obligation to take it any further if it's not for you.

We hope to share information and ideas as to what you need to do if you volunteer to serve on your WI Committee.

Everyone is welcome, just book in the usual way, your WI can pay the small fee to cover coffee and biscuits you just need to bring yourselves. Hope to see you there. Remember volunteering can save your WI from closing.

Public Affairs Committee

Last month a group of WI members from across the county visited the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Temple in Leicester. We were made very welcome by the guide and had clear explanations about each of the rooms we visited. The building was beautiful with all the carvings made in India and then assembled at the temple. It was a fascinating visit and a wonderful way to learn about another Faith. With thanks to the PA Committee for organising the morning.



Fundraising Committee

L&RFWI Spring Lunch- Saturday 11th May at Devonshire Place Leicester

Three members of QE WI attended this year's Spring Lunch, all for the first time and all unsure what to expect.

We had discussed getting a train to Leicester as the venue is so near the station, then with the threat of delays or strikes our member Sue kindly offered to drive us. We arrived at Devonshire Place quite early as we weren't sure how busy the car park would be - there was no need to worry as the car park is enormous.



After a coffee, then a glass of wine for Sarah and me – not Sue our driver – we were ushered into the dining room where the tables were laid to perfection with name tags and our lunch orders, very welcome as we had all forgotten what we'd requested.

As QE WI is still in its infancy, we very much enjoyed sharing our table and talking to women from other more established groups.



Then after our lovely lunch we were entertained by Lesley Smith of Tutbury Castle fame.

Lesley dressed as Katherine Swynford, mistress then wife of John of Gaunt and gave an excellent portrayal of her colourful life.

We can thoroughly recommend these lunches and will try and fill a table with QE WI members next time!

Lorna Williams, QE



Leisure Committee



Ten members from Broughton Astley WI made two teams at the Federation Treasure Hunt on Wednesday 15th May and would like to thank the members of the Leisure Committee for the huge amount of work that went in to organising this event.

The questions were wide ranging and interesting, and the route map very helpful! We were not daunted by a sudden downpour of rain which drenched us and our paperwork! Fortunately it didn't last too long and the sun came out to dry us off.

Answers to the questions (except one, whose clue had been removed due to building works!) could be found on the information boards scattered around the city and on the facades of many buildings. It certainly tested our powers of observation and we all felt that we had learnt a lot. Did you know that there is a section of a 4th century mosaic floor in a display board on the side of the Fish Market? This came from the Cherry Orchard Villa, the home of a wealthy Roman originally situated in Norfolk Street. I am sure many of us have walked past this board many times without noticing it. Have a look the next time you are there.



At the end of the morning all teams met up at the Bishop Street Cafe, where we were nourished with cakes and coffee and exchanged news. It's always good to meet up with members from other WIs in our Federation. We went through the answers to the quiz and one of our teams came first, which was a bonus, but we all agreed it was a really interesting and social occasion and hope that there will be others in the future!

Left: Loddington Members enjoying the Treasure Hunt too

Arts and Crafts Committee

The Arts and Crafts calendar of events this year is looking busy and it's encouraging to see them starting to get booked.

June

15th Lino cutting

29th Stumpwork part 1—Create a raised 3D effect using embroidery.

July

6th Stumpwork part 2

20th Crochet Day—a chance to learn, improve or share crochet techniques and ideas and get some inspiration

October

5th Prick and Stitch—use simple stitching ideas to produce cards and explore other ideas

November

23rd Autumn Dabble day—try your hand at up to 5 different crafts on the day

The art and craft committee look forward to meeting you at these events. If you have any ideas for future events please let us know. It would also be lovely if you knew of venues suitable for future events and if you had willing volunteers to help with organisation and refreshments!



What's On?

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------|
| Thu 20 June | Speakers Showcase | Wing Village Hall | £5 |
| Wed 26 June | White House Gardens and Tea | Ingarsby | £11 FULL |
| Sat 29 June & July 6th | Stumpwork- embroidery style (both sessions) | WI House | £30 |
| Tue 2 July | Faith Visit | Gipsy Lane LE4 6RH | £8 |
| Fri 5 July | Federation Quiz | Various venues | £6 pp (teams of 4) |
| Thurs 11 July | Sewing Bee speaker and strawberry tea | Humberstone | £12 FULL |
| Sat 20 July | Crochet Open Day | WI House | £5 |
| Wed 24 July | Croquet Taster | Leicester Croquet Club | £12 |
| Tue 10 Sept | Pétanque | Hinckley Rd Leicester | £7.50 |
| Sat 14 Sept | Officer Training for Committees | WI House | FREE |
| Fri 27 Sept | Race Night | Scraptoft | £10 |
| Sat 5th Oct | Prick & Stitch | WI House | £25 |

Kathleen Main 1924 Happy 100th Birthday

Kathleen was born in Wanstead and celebrates her 100th birthday in June. She grew up in Leytonstone in Essex and during her early married life she lived first in Lancashire and later in Northumberland with her husband David and her three children. It was in 1964, when the family moved to Little Chalfont in Buckinghamshire, that she joined her first WI where the ladies were expected to dress formally. During this 12-year period, Kathleen became their President. Glove making and flower arranging were two of the crafts she enjoyed. Her second WI was in Southport in Lancashire.

Later, arriving in Oadby in 1978, she immediately joined Oadby WI and was their President for many years. After Oadby WI closed she joined Oadby Brookside WI but during Covid that sadly closed too. Post Covid Kathleen became a member of the daytime WI at Clarendon Park where she was made very welcome.



What does she attribute her longevity to? Kathleen enjoys life, refuses to worry and is outward looking. Until recently she attended Tai Chi classes. Kathleen benefits from a very supportive family and a strong friendship group. Kathleen is an optimist and may be a source of encouragement for all of us.

Monthly Draw

Congratulations to our Monthly Draw winners!

1st Prize £25— Betty Giddens, Burton Lazars

2nd Prize £15— Linda Fenn, Ketton

3rd Prize £10— Elizabeth Middleton, Shearsby & Arnesby



Thank you to all of the members who have supported the Federation by buying a Monthly Draw ticket!

Event Flyers

Stumpwork

Sat 29th June and Sat 6th July



£40 for both days
10am – 3pm
WI House

Speakers Showcase

Thur 20th June



6.30 for 7pm prompt
£5 per person
Wing Village Hall, LE15 8SA

Faith Visit

Tues 2nd July



£8
10am – noon
Gipsy Lane Temple, LE4 6RH

Federation Quiz

Fri 5th July 7.30pm



Broughton Astley Village Hall ,
Oaks In Charnwood Storer Hall,
Oakham All Saints Church Hall
and Syston Community Centre
£6 per person (teams of 4)

Crochet Open Day

Sat 20th July



10-3
WI House
£5—to include all materials

Croquet Taster

Thurs 24th July



2.30pm or 7pm
Croquet Club, Humberstone
£12

Ladies Race Night

Sat 27th Sept



£10 pp including a light supper.
Bring drinks & a glass.
7.30-10pm
Scraptoft Community Hub, LE7 9FQ

Pétanque Fun

Tues 10th Sept



7pm—Western Park, LE3 6HX
£7.50

Prick & Stitch

Sat 5th Oct



includes all materials & tea/coffee
10-3 WI House
£25—to include all materials

If you want to book as an individual, use the booking form on our website
under Federation Downloads

—email the form to wihouse@lrfwi.org or call 0116 2661342

If you want to book with your WI, contact your Secretary or Treasurer

Booking Events

How do I book and get tickets?

Book Through your WI

- Contact one of your WI Officers (Secretary / Treasurer) with the event you would like to book as well as names and contact details for anyone wanting to attend. Please state any Dietary/ Mobility requirements at this time of booking.
- Your WI Officer will complete the form on your behalf and return it to WI House. Your WI officer will receive a confirmation from WI House and it is up to them to cascade across attendees.
- Your WI Officer will collect payment from you and pay the federation on your behalf.
- The federation will invoice the WI not the individuals.

Book as an Individual

- Complete a booking form found at [leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk /eventscaendar](http://leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk/eventscaendar) . You can also contact WI House for a booking form.
- Ensure you select 'Individual Booking' on the booking form to avoid charges to your WI.
- Email or post booking form to wihouse@lrfwi.org.uk or phone 0116 2661342 option1
- WI House will send an email confirmation.
- Pay by BACS or cheque directly to the federation.

No paper tickets will be sent, an email is your confirmation. Do not pay until your booking has been confirmed by email. Please forward the confirmation email to anyone else named on your booking form.

Please ensure all contact details are supplied on the booking form in case of any emergencies.

What if the event is full?

You will be added to a waitlist. All names on the waitlist will be contacted on the deadline for booking to confirm.

- Where we can offer you alternative places (e.g different date/ time) we will.
- Where we cannot provide this then your name will stay on the waitlist if we run the event again to make sure you are prioritised.

Need to pay?

Please send BACS payments to: L&RFWI, NatWest Bank, Sort code: 60-02-17, Account number: 24626546 Reference: Event Name **OR**

wait for the invoice to your WI. Payments by Cheque (Secretaries/Treasurers only) can be sent to WI House made payable to LRFWI with event name written on the back or by BACS as above.

What if the event is cancelled?

If the event does not have sufficient numbers attending to be held we will cancel the event. Sometimes other reasons beyond our control means we need to cancel

- Where we can offer you an alternative (e.g different date/ time) we will.
- If you have paid then you will be refunded.

Need to cancel?

Please let us know ASAP by phoning 0116 2661342 option 1. Once you receive your invoice/receipt, no refunds will be given.

You can arrange for another WI member to attend if you can.

WHAT'S ON? CHECK EVENTS CALENDAR ON leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk **this will show where events are sold out**

INDIVIDUAL BOOKING? EMAIL, POST OR PHONE BOOKING FORM DETAILS AND PAY BY BACS

BOOKING THROUGH SECRETARY? EMAIL, POST OR PHONE BOOKING FORM DETAILS AND PAY BY BACS OR CHEQUE

ANY QUERIES? CALL 0116 2661342 BOOKINGS—OPTION 1, FINANCE—OPTION 3

Around the Counties

Great Bowden

The beginning of May was a busy time, at our monthly meeting the resolution for this year, about the need for more NHS Dentists, was discussed and unanimously passed. The speaker for the evening was Helen Crabtree who spoke about Northamptonshire Curiosities. The tales she told were interesting and amusing of people in the near vicinity like Jack the fiddler from Desborough who took £50 to find the end of a secret passage which eligibly ran from Rushton Hall to Triangular Lodge, but then never went far along before staging his own disappearance. There were places of interest which have a story to tell. These places remain today as do the bones in the Crypt at Rothwell Church of which there are many theories.

We hosted the Welland Valley Group Meeting. This was held in St Peter and St Paul Church in Great Bowden. The venue looked beautiful courtesy of the committee plus some husbands..



The speaker for the afternoon was Colin Hill who had been a Personal Protection Officer for Princess Diana was Princes William and Harry. He told many interesting and funny stories from the 1980s. Cumulating with him actually dancing with princess Diana.

The speaker was followed by the WI Choir who performed several songs from the 1960s to get our feet tapping.

Then it was time for the food. A wonderful spread was provided by Mother Cooker including sandwiches, sausage rolls, pork pie, fruit and delicious cakes. Of course, there was tea, coffee and soft drinks. Everyone tucked in and the buffet was much appreciated.



A wonderful afternoon, thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

Markfield

At our April meeting we were entertained by Baroness Bolsover who styles herself as "The Victorian Afternoon Tea Lady"

The Baroness was dressed in full Victorian costume and acted her part as she took us through the origins, customs and etiquette of afternoon tea. She was incredibly interesting and a larger than life speaker who had us all in fits of laughter. We were all instructed on how to fold our napkins, pour the tea, hold our cups and stir the sugar. As we had all come prepared we tried our hardest to act the part, sitting correctly whilst drinking tea and eating finger food "daintily". whilst also learning a lot about the origins of tea traditions at all levels of society. A thoroughly enjoyable evening and we will be putting our education into practice at the Summer Party we are holding .



Shearsby and Arnesby

We had a very good May meeting where one of our members showed us how to make wax cloths for covering food as an alternative to using plastic film.

Later in the month we went to Blaby Golf Centre to play Crazy Golf which is a lot of fun and we were blessed with a beautiful day. This was followed by lunch at the Lime Tree in Whetstone.



Glenfield



Our meeting this month was a busy one! Two of our long-time members will be celebrating their 90th Birthdays this May and so we each presented with a signed Birthday Card and a beautiful plant, along with all our good wishes.

Our speaker was Paul Taberner who spoke to us about The Real CSI. He had many interesting tales to recount and sadly put paid to all our notions that Silent Witness on TV is an accurate representation of real life! No it really isn't! We heard about burglars who swallow the evidence, an unhappy thought, through to the strict protocols that govern how a search is done at a crime scene. It was a most interesting and often amusing talk which we all enjoyed.

There followed a discussion on the chosen WI Resolution for this year – Dental Health Matters. Members were all in agreement that this resolution should go forward and our delegate, Sue Black will be attending the meeting in London to vote on our behalf.

Robin A Tiptoe Group

40 Members (and a few husbands and friends) visited Tissington in Derbyshire, to see the Well Dressings. It poured with rain all the way there but luckily for us it stopped as we arrived and the sun came out later!

There were 6 Wells around the village all dressed beautifully, and they were showing a video in the Church showing how it was all done. There was a Craft Show in the Village Hall, and a Craft shop and a Candle shop to look around and buy from.

Herbert's Café was the place to go for lunch and then we all met up at 2pm to have a guided tour around Tissington Hall.

Sir Richard FitzHerbert, the ninth Baronet, welcomed us himself into his home. It was a fascinating building and a beautiful garden and we all found it very interesting. We didn't want to leave the village when our coach came to pick us up at 4pm.



Around the Counties

Swinford

"A meeting was held at Stanford Hall," a quote from the early minutes of Swinford WI who are celebrating their centenary this year.

A warm, sunny, May afternoon (Yes there was one!) saw twenty members arriving at Stanford Hall for a guided tour of the house followed by our monthly meeting held while enjoying a delicious High Tea in the Green Drawing Room. During the tour we were able to see a portrait of Lady Ethel, our first president in 1924. Ginny, our guide, regaled us with tales of the house and family giving everyone time to admire this lovely family home. Over tea, served on beautiful china, we held our meeting, including excerpts from historical minutes giving us a flavour of the WI 100 years ago. Our WI tablecloth was displayed on the piano. Embroidered with names of members past and present it felt as though many old friends were joining us for the occasion! A very special meeting in our busy centenary year. Friendship, new experiences, delicious cake and a lot of laughter, some of the best aspects of the WI are timeless. Our thanks go to Jill, Ginny and Lowell who made us so welcome. The minutes for May 2024 will begin, "A meeting was held at Stanford Hall...."



Melton Mowbray

A group of us had a day out to Stratford upon Avon.

We all enjoyed ourselves and the weather was kind.



New Barkby

After a short session on WI business matters, members enjoyed a fish and chip supper, organised by Angela Montague and Louisa Chapman.

Then followed the Resolution on the "Chronic Shortage of NHS Dentists". The debate was led by Angela Montague and Jean Brutnall.

Members voted "FOR" the resolution, with a discretionary vote to be offered by the delegate representing New Barkby WI, if deemed appropriate.

Shirley thanked everyone and there then followed a short amount of social time to conclude the evening's meeting.

Oaks in Charnwood

We celebrated our 50th Anniversary with 20 members sitting down to a special tea party with all the members dressing as if they were attending Ladies Day at Ascot, the Hall was decorated with bunting and a special gold and white cake which was cut by Secretary and founder member Pauline Harper and President Christine Wilkinson



Whissendine

We were delighted to welcome Joe Davis from the Rutland Wildlife Trust to our April meeting to talk about the Rutland Sea Dragon. It was especially exciting as Joe was the person who discovered it. He phoned Rutland County Council and asked who to speak to if you think you've found a dinosaur. The reply was 'Sorry, we don't have a dinosaur department'!

Then Covid and lockdown hit so it was covered over until summer when a team of paleontologists arrived who called themselves the 'Reservoir Digs' and even had matching t-shirts made!

Joe brought with him a scan of the entire creature which he laid out in the village hall. It stretched all the way from the stage to



the door and this is when we could actually see how enormous it was. He also showed us a photo of him lying alongside the creature's head, they are the same length!

Joe was a really informative speaker with this amazing story to tell, backed up by photos showing the development of the reveal, it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Sheepy

Our May meeting was entitled Knickers and Nighties.



We were taken on a journey through underwear and other garments through the years, many items were actually from Elizabeth's own family. The needlework was exquisite. Members enjoyed trying on some of the garments.

Around the Counties

Barrow Upon Soar

We held our Annual Skittles Supper in March. 29 Members and 5 Visitors enjoyed a hot supper followed by the skittle match. After a three way 'Skittle Off' to decide the 'Member's Winner', Alison Bowley took the Lister Cup Trophy and the Prize for 'Highest Visitor Score' was won by Hollie Jones, who has since become a Full WI Member so we have put her name down for the September Skittles League!



Our newly appointed, 'Poet in Residence' (a first for our WI & maybe others?) – Helen Sadler read out her poem, composed from the view of the Skittles who were actually names of some of our members!

At Our April Meeting Sue, one of our new members gave us a very interesting talk on "Parkinson's Disease, Golf & Me". Diagnosed eight years ago with the condition when she was fifty-four, it took six months before she knew she had Parkinson's as she was misdiagnosed initially.

Parkinson's disease is a neurological disease affecting the central nervous system. It is the loss of Dopamine in the Nerve Cells that causes the symptoms. Symptoms may vary from person to person. Sue experiences tremors when nervous (like having butterflies outside your body), tiredness, shaky handwriting & stiffness when walking due to rigidity of muscles. Cold and hot temperatures can bring on shaking.

Helping Sue other than medication is a device called Cue 1 which is a wearable medical device she calls her "buzzer". The device vibrates, stimulating the stiffness, rigidity, irregular gait and slowness of her body. She also receives neurological physio in Nottingham. Exercise has been her saviour though, particularly golf, which improves her mobility, balance and her social life. Fortunately, she can drive, but it must be reviewed every three years by her GP.



Thurnby and Bushby

We held our resolutions meeting in May. Member Jenny Berry gave us an interesting and informative presentation on dental health and the problems with the provision of NHS dental services. Afterwards we took the opportunity to try out our new bingo set. Red balls and red numbers proved quite a challenge for our caller, as did the rather fiddly mechanism to draw the balls. Despite this, in the true WI spirit of fun and friendship, a good time was had by all.



Leicester Ladies

We had an enjoyable evening with Roxanne.

She gave us an informative, colourful and amusing talk, dispelling many myths plus a demonstration of Middle Eastern Dance (Belly Dance)



Ratby

This month we were called upon to vote upon the resolutions for the coming year that will be taken forward by Head Office. Once this has been agreed we will outline what actions will be supported by all of the local WI groups throughout the country. We were also treated to a lively game of bingo with prizes for the lucky winners. Tea, coffee and biscuits were served and the group had a great evening catching up with each other and exchanging news and stories.



Loughborough Ladies

A group of us went on the Leicester Museums Store Tour. There are many items that cannot be displayed in the City's museums due to lack of capacity but there is also a huge quantity of items that are not rare or interesting enough to earn a place on display to the public but which have cultural or other significance and so they are stored in a vast warehouse.

Tours show just a few of the tens of thousands of fascinating items including furniture, art, ceramics, machinery, stuffed animals and more shoes than Imelda Marcos could have dreamed of. It was absolutely fascinating and we all agreed that we would love to be locked in there for a week!



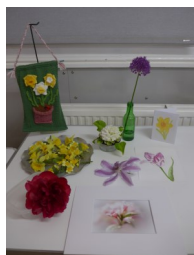
We also spent an evening making fabric brooches under the expert tuition of Carolyn Boulter. Carolyn had prepared kits for each of us making it very easy to produce really pretty rosette brooches. She also showed us examples of her own immaculate needlework. We very much enjoyed sewing our creations but also enjoyed the chance to chat with friends and, as usual, to partake of tea/coffee and lovely homemade cake.



Around the Counties

Broughton Astley

After we had completed the Resolution voting process at our May meeting, we welcomed Carolyn Boulter to guide us all through making a lavender heart. As usual Carolyn had prepared a pack for everyone, which included the heart itself as well as a fabric circle to make a Suffolk puff decoration, button, bow, ribbon and even a threaded needle. And of course a little bag of filling and lavender seeds. With Carolyn's help we all were successful in our sewing and had a very attractive heart to take home. It was a very mindful and social occasion with much chat and laughter, not to mention a sprinkling of lavender seeds everywhere!



Our competition for this month was "A Spring Flower" and we had a wide range of entries which included fresh flowers, a painting, a photograph and knitted daffodils. Carolyn had difficulty deciding on the winners but they were 1st Sheila P with a red peony, 2nd Lynn B with her painting of tulips and 3rd Angela with her knitted panel of daffodils.

Ten members took part in one of the Federation Treasure Hunts, one of our teams being the winners for that date, and we thank the Leisure committee for the huge amount of work that it entailed to make it so enjoyable. It certainly tested our powers of observation!

Birstall and Wanlip

We had a lovely walk to Belgrave Hall to meet our guide Mark. He explained the history of the house and families that had lived there, it was really interesting. The heritage exhibition was open so we had a quick look.

The gardens are open every Wednesday through the summer, time and date of other events are in the Leicester museums we site if other WIs are interested.



Avon Group

In May 47 members from the Avon Group assembled in Gilmorton Village Hall for the Annual Rose Bowl Quiz.

The anticipation was palpable, not really it was everyone catching up with each other.

There were certainly some very varied responses to the rounds of questions as the evening went on,

We had 6 rounds of questions on:

Connections,

General Knowledge

Multiple Choice Trivia

After the first 3 rounds we were served a lovely Ploughman's supper and a choice of fabulous cake by Gilmorton ladies.

Once we had all been suitably refreshed we completed the rounds with

Anagrams of seaside towns in England

Tom, Dick or Harry

True or false.

The winning team were **North Kilworth Belles**

My personal thanks go to all those who provided their support and came along to what was an enjoyable and profitable evening.

Cossington

Richard Croker gave an interesting talk about the 'Dogs that make and save lives'. Started some 15 years ago this charity trains dogs to detect a variety of illnesses. They used a legacy of £800,000 to establish a training centre in Milton Keynes where dogs attend each day for up to 2 years to identify specific scents produced by illness. They alert their owner if they are becoming ill. Early diagnosis can be life-saving. Other dogs alert their owner if they are about to have an episode of fainting, Addisons Disease and some twelve other conditions. Their owner can then reach a place of safety.

Members then decided to support the FreeVA charity, a confidential help and support service based in Leicester, for women suffering abuse.

Help was sought as the WI will be represented at Cossington Open Gardens event during May Bank Holiday and dates for a variety of social events were confirmed.

News to **WI House** by email: fedsec@lrfwi.org or post to arrive by the **FIRST** of the preceding month

Make sure to include the name of your WI with your article

Please try to keep Around the Counties articles to 120 words and 2 photos so we can include as many as possible and save paper, ink and postage costs.

Articles may be edited.

County News will be emailed, posted on Wednesday of the third full week of the month.

Around the Counties

Woodhouse Eaves



Our May meeting had a warm and woolly feel to it! We sat back to listen to our guest speaker, Angela Dewes, talking about and demonstrating how beautiful fleeces can be turned into both carpets and hand knitted garments and accessories.

Angela began by telling members a little of her background and how, as a very keen knitter, she got into her life-long work which started as a hobby. Angela said that in recent years natural fibres had very much come back into vogue and there was a demand for a variety of types of wool from coarse fibres needed for carpets to obviously softer ones used for knitted garments. There was some irony in the fact that last year individual fleeces could sell for 29p each when it had cost several pounds to fleece each animal!

Demonstrating various techniques to achieve varying strengths of wool, she showed us how carding and spinning could produce anything from worsted wool, which has a tighter twist for strength to a looser twist producing a more 'stretchy' result. At the end of her talk we were then invited to inspect her spinning wheel and admire the many different coloured samples of her wool and the resulting knitted items. Angela now teaches spinning and yarn-making and for anyone interested in pursuing their own interests in this skilled craft Angela can be contacted on:

www.barnspun yarn and farm.co.uk

Anstey



During April, we had an interesting evening hearing from Ian Mattioli, former High Sheriff of Leicestershire, about his rise from humble beginnings. A small group went to the cinema to see Vindication the story of Mercedes Gleitze, the first British woman to swim the channel; an Inspiring Woman indeed. We enjoyed afternoon tea afterwards.

Anstey WIs May meeting proved very enjoyable. Discussion and adoption of the resolution for the annual meeting was followed by an ingenious quiz about teeth, led by Jan Darby. A great deal of guesswork was needed, and we all learned something new, such as how much saliva the average person produces in a lifetime. You would be amazed, as we were.

Each May, members compete for craft, flower arranging and baking trophies. This year the theme was the Olympics, and entrants showed imagination and skill in what they produced.

Sheryl Bramley retained the cookery trophy she won last year, and Sue Crook triumphed in craft and flower arranging. These are two very talented ladies, or should I say Inspiring Women.



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