

## SPRING LUNCH WITH WI NATIONAL CHAIR



In May we were delighted to have our WI National Chair, Jeryl Stone, as our speaker for our Spring Lunch at Devonshire Place, Leicester. Everyone had a great time and a lovely lunch, and Jeryl delighted us all with a very enjoyable talk on *"the future of the WI"*, and she circulated a questionnaire about what the WI would look like in 20 years time. She was very personable and ensured that she spoke with as many WI members as she could.



<b>Federation Chairman</b> Glenice Wignall glenicewignall@lrfwi.org	<b>Federation Treasurer</b> Mary Hobbs maryhobbs@lrfwi.org	<b>Federation Secretary</b> Tina Lee fedsec@lrfwi.org	<b>Office Manager/Accounts</b> Lois McKinder wihouse@lrfwi.org	<b>Finance</b> finance@lrfwi.org
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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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[www.leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk](http://www.leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk) or scan QR code

Find us on Facebook: Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of WIs



## From the Board



I am pleased to announce that the wonderful speakers we had at our ACM, the Baldwin Trust, will be our charity of the year in 2025. Of course it is very much the decision of each WI whether they donate to the Baldwin Trust, or whichever charity they see fit as long as it is aligned with the WI guidelines.

The Baldwin Trust is community based registered charity which provides narrowboat trips on Leicestershire's waterway systems to enhance the well-being of people of all ages, especially those with disabilities, mental illness, social exclusion or isolation. The boat trips supplied by the Trust can provide learning and recreational opportunities to help people maintain a healthy lifestyle, discover new experiences, gain skills, by improving the quality of their life and their life opportunities.

We also announced that the Annual Holiday for 2026 will be at Alvaston Hall, Cheshire from 19th January to 23rd January 2026. This wonderful hotel delivers a memorable experience and is located just five minutes from the Cheshire riverside town of Nantwich. For an application form please contact [wihouse@lrfwi.org](mailto:wihouse@lrfwi.org) or call 0116 2661342.

## From the House

For the July and August editions of Country News we will be combining these into just one edition, which will be circulated to WIs mid August. This is because some WIs have a holiday month and so we have a bumper edition for you! If you prefer to listen to County News, then it's easy to select the READ ALOUD facility on your computer.

County News is sent to you in PDF format (portable document format). If you want to listen to it, just open the document and look for the icon shown on the right here. **It will be on the top bar.** Click on it and you will see that it will start reading the document automatically; you can pause, rewind and fast forward.

Please note there are FREE Promotion Packs available from WI House including;

- Copies of WI Life
- WI Posters A4 & A5
- QR Code for new Members to scan to take them straight to the new member enquiry website
- WI Postcards
- New member leaflets



Just contact WI House and we'll post them to you—0116 2661342

**Opening Hours of WI House**—in the next edition we will also be giving an update on the 3-month trial period for the revised opening hours of WI House. As a reminder the opening hours are now Monday-Wednesday from 9:30am to 2:30pm.

**On-line NFWI Annual Meeting**—this year's NFWI Annual Meeting is being held on-line on Wednesday 4th June 2025, Link Delegates will report back to your various WIs the outcomes, including the Resolution voting results and overall proceedings.

## Finance & House Management Committee

### Timeline for WI Treasurers

As we all know, timely and efficient management of our finances is key to keeping the Women's Institute running smoothly and supporting the many activities that enrich our communities. To help WI Treasurers stay on top of their responsibilities, we've put together a handy **timeline of activities** to ensure all financial tasks are completed in a timely manner throughout the year:

Month	Activity	Deadline/Notes
July	Payment of Subs (100% of full subs) from new members (Apr-Jun Qtr 1)	Pay Subs by mid May
August	Federation End of Year Accounts	Submit by 31 Aug
October	Payment of Subs (75% of full subs) from new members (Jul-Sep Qtr 2)	Pay Subs by 31 Oct
November	Return the Annual Report and WI Financial Statement to WI House	Return by January 2026

MCS should be updated through the year and Subs should be paid when you have them—don't wait, just send what you have.

This timeline will ensure that all activities are carried out in a timely manner, helping WI Treasurers stay organised and avoid missing important deadlines.

It's important to stay on top of these tasks to keep everything running smoothly.



## Would you like to be an IFE?

What is an IFE? The initials IFE stand for Independent Financial Examiner and it's pronounced 'iffy', though these folks are far from iffy!

LRFWI has a scheme whereby members (and non-members) are trained to become IFEs to examine the accounts of our WIs at the end of the financial year. As financial statements have to be prepared and checked before WIs annual meetings, most of the work will take place during August, September and October.

IFE's are highly valued by the Federation, and the work they do is very important. If you'd like to join our band of IFE's, please do get in touch. Full training for this role will be given.

For further details please contact the Office on 0116 266 1342 or [wihouse@lrfwi.org](mailto:wihouse@lrfwi.org)





## Membership Committee

WI Advisers are members just like you, who have been **appointed by the federation** to fulfil this role. As a WI Adviser you would help to establish new WIs and help existing WIs to grow by promoting membership, providing advice, and running training sessions.

The certificated training for this role has been streamlined – so it's all online on the WI Training Hub and there are 7 modules. You can complete the modules at your own pace and you do not have to complete all the training in one sitting. Why not take a look?

<https://learninghub.thewi.org.uk/book-wi-adviser-training/>

In addition to this training, those new to the role will spend time shadowing existing WI Advisers within the federation, including observing monthly Membership Committee Meetings - when WI Advisers get together to discuss business and share best practice.

Experience being a WI committee member is useful, as well as basic IT skills.

Why not contribute to the success of LRFWI and beyond?

You can also go to: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/federation-team/federation-positions/wi-advisers>

Email me at: [mandycutler@lrfwi.org](mailto:mandycutler@lrfwi.org) or phone 07724 124094.

## Officers Training—April 2025

The April training sessions for officers went very well, with additional provision for secretaries who wanted to consider alternatives to Microsoft Office 365: we looked at generic gmail addresses, as well as Forms and Sheets - alternatives to Word and Excel. All available with a free Google Account.

Participants enjoyed the opportunity to share their experiences and questions about their role.

Feedback was positive and we are always open to suggestions about what will be helpful.

If you missed the training and feel you need support, then do please get in touch: the list of WI Adviser allocations can be found on the Federation Website under **Federation and WI Information** – click here: <https://leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk/federation-downloads>

## Arts and Crafts Committee



The Arts & Crafts committee would like to thank everyone who attended the Dabble Day in Peatling Parva. It was a really successful day all round. The sun shone there were five inspiring crafts to have a “dabble” at. Origami Easter Cards, fabric covered eggs, fabric cactus, Bargello Keyring and Zen Doodling . Friendship, fun and laughter no-one wanted to go home!



Details of the Winter Dabble Day to be released soon.

If any WI would like to host a Dabble Day please contact [clarefarquhar@lrfwi.org](mailto:clarefarquhar@lrfwi.org)



## LEISURE COMMITTEE



The skittles competition entry forms have been sent out so please check that it hasn't been buried in your junk folder and book your team in as soon as possible. Now that we play Round Robin style, each team plays more than one match. Having more teams means the groups can be smaller, which in turn, makes for shorter travelling distances. This year we will have more time to fit our matches in. If we don't manage to play the final before the ACM, the trophies will be awarded the following year.

Thank you to the 18 WIs who have entered the darts competition this year.

Many of the scores so far have been very close which indicates teams are well matched. Several participants have reported enjoying the social aspect of meeting other teams whether they win or not. We are a friendly lot in the WI so the adage *"the joy is in the playing as much as the winning"* was probably coined for us!



## What's On?\*

Date	Event	Venue	Price
Sat 28th June & Sat 5th July	Stumpwork Workshop	WI House	£40 for both
Mon 30th June	Walking Netball	Wreake Valley, Syston	£5
Fri 4th July	Federation Quiz	<b>Four venues:</b> Bagworth, Rearsby, Stoney Stanton & Wing Village Hall	£7 per person Teams of 4
Thu 17th July	Summer Tea & Cakes	Broughton Astley Village Hall	£14
Thu 7th August & Tue 12th August	University of Leicester Botanical Gardens	3 Glebe Road, Leicester	£14

\* final details on What's On are to be confirmed by the Board

## THE BALDWIN TRUST

We are pleased to announce that **The Baldwin Trust** are the LRFWI charity of the year for 2025.

The Baldwin Trust was created some 40 years ago to provide some therapeutic boat trips on a stretch of tranquil water ways around Leicestershire/Loughborough area for those that were affected with health issues.

It all started with one boat but has since progressed to two that are crewed by qualified Skippers and volunteers. The boats can take up to 12 passengers and maximum of 4 wheelchairs (disabled facilities available).

Private hiring for family and friends to view the water banks are available at a cost. You can take your own food and drink—use of the well-equipped galley and of course there are toilets. The boats are moored at Barrow-upon-Soar or Leicester Marina, Thurmaston.

All this comes at a cost and has to be paid for—so if you feel you would like to donate to this year's Federation Charity you can either send your donations to WI House or directly to the Baldwin Trust (details overleaf).

## The Baldwin Trust—our charity of the year

There are multiple ways for members to make donations:

1. Send cheques to - **The Baldwin Trust, c/o Mrs H Coombe (Secretary), 2 Cottesmore Close, Syston, Leicestershire LE7 2DJ**. Please write WI Charity of the Year 2025 on the reverse so we can count WI donations.

2. Via **BACS**

Account name: **The Baldwin Trust**

Sort Code: **30-90-89**

Account Number: **37391360**

3. Via the website - [www.baldwintrust.co.uk](http://www.baldwintrust.co.uk)

4. Adding a cheque to **The Baldwin Trust** in the envelope sent with the paper mailing and we will send them through to the charity every quarter.



## Family Favourite Recipe—Date Slice

Gail's recipe:

225g/8oz Pitted Dates

125ml/5 fl oz water

5ml/1tsp vanilla extract

150g/5oz butter or margarine

150g/5oz rolled oats

150g/5oz soft brown sugar

150g/5oz fine whole-wheat flour

Place the dates and water into a microwave dish, cook uncovered for 5 mins on full-power, then add vanilla extract and beat into a puree using a wooden spoon.

Melt the butter in the microwave for 1 minute, then add remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly.

Line a deep 8" plate with baking parchment. Press a thick layer of the flapjack mixture evenly over the base of the plate using the back of a metal spoon.

Spread the date puree over the base, and then top with the remaining flapjack mixture.

Cook in microwave for 6 mins on full-power, allow to cool then remove from plate.

Store in an airtight container after cutting into wedges to serve.

## Monthly Draw

Our monthly draw winners this month will be informed by letter and announced on our Facebook page:

**1st Prize is £25, 2nd Prize is £15 &  
3rd Prize is £10**

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



### Stumpwork Workshop



Saturday 28th June &  
Saturday 5th July

WI House, 135  
Loughborough Road,  
Leicester LE4 5LQ

**£40** for both days  
10am—3pm

### Summer Tea & Cakes



Thursday 17th July

Broughton Astley Village Hall,  
Station Road, Broughton  
Astley, Leicester LE9 6PT

Tickets **£14**

### UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER BOTANICAL GARDENS



3 Glebe Road, Leicester LE2  
2LD

Thursday 7th August—  
10.30am-1pm

**£14**—includes tea and cakes

### **£7 per person – teams of four.**

Are you up for a challenge? Will your general knowledge help you to reign supreme?  
Then gather together members, friends and family and enter a team at one of the four venues in  
this year's Federation Quiz.



**Bagworth Community Centre, LE67 1BH**

**Rearsby Village Hall, LE7 3DH**

**Stoney Stanton Village Hall, LE9 4LQ**

**Wing Village Hall, LE15 8SA**

**7pm for 7.30pm.** Each team must have 2 WI members, the event is open to non-members, male and female. Light refreshments included. Bring your own drinks if you wish. If you would like to book for this event, please **contact your WI secretary** or email [wihouse@lrfwi.org](mailto:wihouse@lrfwi.org) with a booking form and pay by BACS by 24th June 2025. Please state clearly the venue you wish to book and if you have any accessibility requirements.

**Secretaries/Treasurers—Don't leave your booking until the closing date. You can add to the booking by phone at a later date if further members want to attend.**

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](mailto:wihouse@lrfwi.org) or call 0116 2661342

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



## Around the Counties

It is lovely to read all your reports from your meetings but unfortunately we sometimes need to edit articles. We ask you to try to keep to 120 words and 2 photos, preferably including your members. Try not to give too much away about the talk so others that have the speaker can be surprised. We do not print details of future meetings as often these happen before County News goes out.

**Apologies to Broughton Astley as their report was cut short unintentionally. We have included their full report from last month as well as their report from this month.**

### BROUGHTON ASTLEY



Barry Watson and his wife ran a very successful canal hotel boat company for six years until 2002 as part of his career in canal boating on our wonderful canals and waterways. He started his talk with a bit of history of canals – the Romans started them, of course, joining the Fosse-dyke to Lincoln – then in the 1760s the Duke of Bridgewater wanted to move his coal and Josiah Wedgwood his pots so Joseph Brindley was commissioned to build for them. They flourished in the 1790s and only declined, not with the coming of the railways as we had thought, but with the expansion of roads and lorries in the 1960s and the big freeze of 1963. Their use for commerce finally ended around 1970.

Barry's canal boat hotel, which consisted of a motorised boat pulling a second one which comprised the accommodation, operated for 31 weeks a year and was always fully booked. "Full board" catering with entertainment were provided as his guests were taken along the canal networks. Barry interspersed his talk "the agony and ecstasy of canal hotel boating" with amusing anecdotes, songs and a poem. He described "the agony" as 1) toilets; 2) laundry and 3) shopping, along with long steps of locks and a few hairy moments untangling the rudder! The "ecstasy" for him was meeting many lovely guests and other canal boaters and enjoying the freedom of being on his beloved canals in our beautiful countryside.



Gail Wooliscroft and her daughter Karen were our guests to demonstrate "Decadent Desserts", and what a treat of an evening it was. Not only did Gail make three wonderful desserts with decadent ingredients – lots of cream was involved, but healthy fruit too! - in 45 minutes, but we were able to sample them all in our refreshment break.

Of course she made it look so easy but hopefully with her expert tuition and the recipe sheet, which actually gave a fourth recipe, I am sure many of us will be trying one, if not all, at future dinner parties.

A small group of our members took up the offer from Uppingham Council to visit their interesting town. A coach was laid on to pick us up, stopping off in other villages along the way, arriving in Uppingham where we were met by the Mayor and his assistant with a goody bag for us all. We mostly followed the town trail, visiting the market and interesting shops before enjoying lunch then a guided tour of Uppingham School. It was a really interesting day and we can recommend a visit there.



### Charnwood Wigs



Excellent, enthusiastic speaker Jo from Charnwood Foraging attended a recent members meeting explaining all about how to identify edible fruit, foliage, flora and fungus (mushrooms)

and their uses in the kitchen. A fabulous evening!



### Woodhouse Eves

For our April meeting we settled back to listen to Paul Read and his talk entitled "Reach for the stars".

From the outset it was clear Paul was used to giving a performance – he spoke from the stage and every word could be heard, even from the back of the hall. He now works as a principal dresser in the theatre, and he began by describing the excitement we all feel when attending a live performance. The scenery, lighting, costumes and make-up all contribute to the illusion of being in another world. The reality of working backstage is quite different from the glamour traditionally associated with the theatre – Paul works in the dark, wearing black clothes, often in cramped conditions and with little time to help performers change costumes.

Paul demonstrated some of the tricks of the trade used so that costumes can be changed quickly – skirts laid out so they can be stepped into, false shirt fronts and cuffs, lots of Velcro and even magnets to hold clothes together! Once a show ends the costumes are sometimes sold to a costume warehouse but are often just destroyed. Paul showed us some of the dresses he has salvaged, including ones worn by Elaine Page in "Evita".



Working as a principal dresser goes far beyond helping with costume changes, however. Paul described himself as an amateur psychologist as he must understand the personality of the performer he is working with. Paul's job is to make sure everything is organised to the actor's (often exacting) requirements.

### Fleckney

On Saturday April 26th, about 30 people gathered in Fleckney village hall for a training session on what to do if someone collapses. The training was given by Heartwise, and arranged by the Rotary Club and Fleckney WI. The village hall committee very kindly let us use the hall free of charge, as it was such a worthwhile event.

We learnt how to respond to a collapsed person in the first instance, and then how to get their heart going again until an ambulance arrives. We were all possibly relieved to know that mouth to mouth resuscitation is not used these days. There were enough dummies for each participant to practise CPR. We were also shown how to use a defibrillator if necessary. In our village, we have several of these, outside the Baptist Church, at the allotments, and in the Co-op.



## Around the Counties

### Thurnby & Bushby

At our March meeting we welcomed Veronica White to share with us her passion for pottery. She came equipped with plenty of clay and a whole host of equipment along with some pots that she had made. She demonstrated the use of the potter's wheel and those members who wanted to get their hands dirty had a go at making pinched pots.



At our April meeting we celebrated our 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. A sometimes-frantic Beetle Drive was followed by a glass of fizz and a slice of beautiful cake made by our president Judith Heatley. It really did taste as good as it looked.

Earlier this year two of our members took part in the Bra Crafts sewing competition to make items from recycled bras that could be sold to raise money for Breast Cancer Charities. Our first challenge was to take apart the old bras which took a lot longer than we had anticipated. We soon learnt that bigger bras gave us more material to work with, although we were allowed to use additional materials. We spent many hours racking our brains and fiddling with lace and padding to come up with our creations and had a lot of fun along the way.

### Great Glen

Some members of Great Glen's Busy Bee craft group have indeed been very busy and have produced some wonderful items for the neonatal and cancer wards of the University Hospitals of Leicester. The dolls are reversible with one end knitted with hair and it can then be turned over to a head with a hat on and no hair. These are to support children who are receiving cancer treatment. The headbands are for all ages receiving cancer treatment and range from plain to wonderfully patterned and glittery. The hats are for newborn babies in the neonatal unit.



### Cossington



A very busy March for Cossington members. They enjoyed a lovely day on a private tour learning about the history of Wollaton Hall and included in the tour was an opportunity to visit the roof and see the amazing view over grounds. Afterwards we wandered round the grounds and visited the Camellia house the oldest glass framed house in Europe and a visit to finish the day. Our members also treat themselves to tea and cakes at Beardsley tearoom at Rearsby for an afternoon of chatting and socialising.

To finish the month some members enjoyed an evening at Little Theatre Leicester to see Vicar of Dibley. We must thank our Social committee for arranging these.



### Market Harborough



Last month the ladies of the Market Harborough WI were visited by the well-known authority on Victorian Tea Etiquette Baroness Bolsover – aka The Tea Lady – who proceeded to demonstrate the ins and outs of this quintessential English tradition made popular by the Duchess of Bedford in the 1860s.

In her inimitable style Her Ladyship provided life changing answers to burning questions: What goes into the cup first – tea or milk? (Milk always second unless you are from below stairs!), what NEVER to do if your napkin slips off your lap (Pick it up – that is the butler's job!) and how to hold your tea cup (NO – well brought up ladies do NOT have little fingers sticking out). Our members dressed up for the occasion completed with hats or fascinators. A fun and enjoyable evening was had by all.

### Hinckley Hollycroft



Pamela from Knitted Knockers UK gave us a fascinating insight into the intricacies of producing these invaluable aids for women after breast surgery. It's not just a matter of knitting a 'false boob' – the stringent regulations and quality checks are exhaustive and the knitters work under the highest degree of supervision to provide a more comfortable alternative to heavier silicon breast forms.

The charity, funded fully by donations, is now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of providing bespoke orders completely free of charge for women nationwide – *'made with love, filled with hope'*.

### Sapcote

We made our March meeting an open event. We had already booked a talk from Bill Devitt and thought it an ideal meeting to interest new members.

Bill spoke to us about the history of the Orient Express and some of the very interesting famous and infamous passengers. He talked of his refurbishment involvement of some of the carriages: some resurrected from scrap heaps and restored to a form fit for 21<sup>st</sup> Century luxury travel. We rounded off with social time where new faces were made welcome and accompanied by Tea, Coffee and delicious homemade cakes.

So, was it worth our while? Consensus: YES. We have definitely gained 4 new members and hopefully a fifth.

At the end March, Sapcote WI was honoured to host the High Cross Group AGM. This was held at the Mary Forryan Centre. We were entertained by LE8 FIVE Brass Quintet.

They were wonderful. They opened our evening with an amazing rendition of Jerusalem and we went on to enjoy music from ABBA, songs from the shows, the Beatles and many more artists. Our feet were tapping and some of us were singing along! A good time was had by all.



## Around the Counties

### Loughborough Ladies



Loughborough Ladies opened up our April meeting to visitors with assistance from a Federation grant. Around ten visitors attended and enjoyed crafting an Easter wreath while chatting with our members. We had pre-prepared kits and provided lots of extra

decorations which resulted in some beautiful creations. Refreshments were provided including a delicious simnel cake baked by Pauline and lovely cheese scones brought by one of the visitors who has since become a member. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening and we hope to see many of the visitors again soon.



### Thringstone

On Tuesday 18th March we celebrated St Patrick's Day plus one. Our evening began with a performance of Irish dancing from Thornley Dance Academy enjoyed by everyone.

Followed by an Irish Buffet. One of our members brought her guitar so we all joined in singing Molly Malone which brought a close our meeting. a great way to end our St Patrick's Day plus one.



*'To be sure'*

### Leicester Ladies

Leicester Ladies WI had a great meeting in our new venue, at Stoneygate Baptist Church on London Road. It was a busy evening with a craft session to start and then a blind tasting of hot-cross buns. What more can a WI member want !

We made a cute bunny in a carrot sleeping bag and carried on with the Spring theme by sampling hot-cross buns. Tesco's and Sainsbury's were the most popular, scoring the highest against the other top supermarkets and suppliers.



### Hathern



Hathern WI hosted an Open Meeting on Monday 17th March partly funded with a £50 grant from Federation. Gail Wooliscroft, President, opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests. A packed room enjoyed an excellent talk from Tom Ingall, BBC Look North, who spoke passionately about the history and reunification of The Great Central Railway.

Hathern Members ran craft stalls - displaying and selling their work and also provided a fabulous selection of cakes to go with our tea and coffee.

### Ilston

We were treated to an unforgettable and heartwarming talk when Nick Sydenham paid a visit to share the remarkable work of this life-changing charity. Canine Partners is an organisation that transforms lives by training assistance dogs to support people with physical disabilities – many of whom rely on wheelchairs for daily mobility.

Nick captivated the audience with stories that highlighted just how extraordinary these four-legged helpers truly are. The dogs, typically labradors or retrievers, are carefully selected and trained to match the unique needs of their human partners. These intelligent and intuitive companions are capable of performing a wide array of tasks designed to give their partners greater independence and confidence. Among the many impressive skills these dogs possess, they can open doors, retrieve laundry from washing machines, place into baskets and even hand pegs to their partner to help them hang clothes out to dry. They've also been trained to press buttons, not just on traffic lights for safe crossing, but also at the entrances to shops, banks and other public spaces. The list of their talents continues. By the end of Nick's visit the members of Ilston WI were completely blown away by the abilities of these wonderful "best friends".

Must just mention that we have several members or their family members attending the Royal Garden Party in May, one for farming in the community, another for services to International Scouts and finally a daughter for services to education. We are very proud of them all.

### Woodhouse Eaves

The speakers for the March meeting were Bob and Jane Johnson who described at ages of 56 and 57, with some DIY skills but no previous experience of house construction, they started planning and then building their own home, doing 80% of the work themselves. The first job was to demolish an existing bungalow, which took them eight months, recycling as much of the material as possible. Some of the timber and floorboards were used to build a site office and store.

Bob and Jane designed the house themselves, based on a cube, with small north-facing windows and large south-facing windows. The most important design features were the insulation, triple-glazed windows, ventilation, airtightness and avoidance of thermal bridges. Bob explained that the house does not conform to the principles of building an eco-house, on account of the materials used. However, the house is extremely energy efficient. The internal temperature is a constant 20-21° throughout the year with no gas, no boiler, no radiators and no log burner.

Several of the photographs showed Jane hard at work - removing the mortar from recycled bricks, tying the reinforcing mesh together and driving the dumper! We did see a photograph of Bob on the roof and he said that had been the hardest job for him, as he did not like working at height. The house took seven years to build from start to finish! It looks beautiful and is a testament to Bob and Jane's detailed planning, physical effort and stamina.



## Around the Counties

### Swepstone, Newtown & Snarestone



In February we held a Beetle Dive which was very competitive between all members it was a lot of fun and enjoyed by all.

March was a speaker who is representing England in the under 20s Ultimate Frisbee, a local girl who competed at international level last year; she has been chosen to represent the country again this year. Ultimate Frisbee is nothing like playing on the beach or throwing for your dog which is why we were all surprised at the speed of play and the distance that the competitors have to cover in a match! Ruby explained that they have to self-officiate even at the highest level of competition, she also explained there is no funding and all team members must fund themselves. If any WI would appreciate a different type of speaker, Ruby would be an excellent choice.

### Botcheston

Well another month has passed – relatively quiet, but as I think with most WIs preparing for our busy months.

At our March meeting we were enlightened by Sally-Anne Munro with a talk about the principles of Tai Chi followed by a participation session of Tai Chi. I think we all felt rejuvenated. To complement the session instead of cakes and biscuits we had a selection of Chinese finger bites.



Our busy Baking Season is upon us – we will be at Desford Festival of the 1940s/VE Day Celebrations on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of May (which may have happened by the time you read this) providing refreshments in the Churchill Tearooms.

### New Barkby

At the recent ACM, Alma Wright collected a 100th year certificate from Federation Chairman. At our meeting speaker Ginnette Brookes, a dance teacher, talked about her career (she had dance lessons from 4 years of age) and now teaches various dance styles to different age groups, especially Dance Silver Swans – Adult Ballet.

After listening to some snatches of ballet music, members with Ginnette's instructions learnt some arm and leg movements and deportment. With or without footwear, everyone performed well with their twinkling toes and managed to end the session with a curtsy and maybe becoming ballerinas.



### Waltham on the Wolds



We welcomed Margaret Dickinson to our April meeting. She is an author of over 30 novels with her latest coming out at the end of this month. As with most writers it was difficult to get a publisher at first, and when she did, it was only in hardback. Eventually she managed to get a different agent who got her books printed in paperback in 1991. Since then she has written one book a year. She does a lot of research into the places she is writing about, but all her characters are fictitious. Some ladies bought a book from the selection she brought and Margaret was kind enough to donate two books to our raffle.

### Coleorton

For our March meeting at the Beaumont Centre our speaker was the Baroness of Bolsover who entertained with a talk on the etiquette of afternoon tea. The Baroness, dressed in period costume, instructed everyone on how to sit correctly stating legs were not to be crossed but tucked together modestly, and showed how to deal with and fold the napkin before doing anything else.

All members were asked to bring a china cup and saucer and she demonstrated how to stir your tea correctly. Interestingly not round and round but forward and backwards. Finally the placement of the teaspoon was vital and in the wrong place could be seen as bad manners. Having told everyone to keep their little finger down when sipping from the cup and to eat daintily she spoke about the history of some tea companies and blending of teas.

This was a highly amusing and engaging session after which was a delicious afternoon tea provided by the committee—hopefully eaten daintily and the tea stirred correctly!

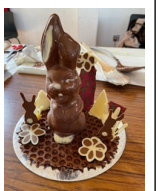
### Glenfield



Our latest meeting was a visual feast for the chocaholics amongst us. Emma Grant gave a demonstration in the art of the chocolatier whilst also giving a potted history of chocolate and how it has become almost everyone's favourite treat. It was interesting to learn that the production of chocolate results in by-products that are used elsewhere. For example, cocoa butter in the production of toiletries, the shells of cocoa beans in the production of fertiliser and in a newly developed product called cocoa cardboard which Mars Wrigley UK is trialling for their packaging.

During the course of her demonstration, Emma created an Easter themed rabbit scene which she kindly donated to the raffle held later in the afternoon.

Everyone enjoyed Emma's demo and the chocolate goodies she brought with her for sale were eagerly inspected and purchased by our members. Who doesn't love chocolate, especially when it's handmade and beautifully presented?





## Around the Counties

### Coleorton

At our April meeting we welcomed Dave Andrews as our speaker. He talked about the bones in the car park and the history of Richard 111. It was particularly relevant as this talk coincided with the 10th anniversary of the discovery of Richard's skeleton in the now famous car park in Leicester. We had a very interesting history lesson detailing Richard's early life and coronation up to the battle of Bosworth and his subsequent burial without ceremony. Dave's delivery of the subject was informative and inspired and as an ex BBC Radio Leicester reporter he had the honour of covering all three of services involved with the re-internment of Richard. He said it was the best story he was ever involved with at Radio Leicester!



### Ratby

We had a lovely meeting and many of our members joined in the fun making an Easter bonnet. The bonnets were all beautiful and varied in style. Prizes were given to the three winners as voted by the members. We then had refreshments followed by a beetle drive.



### Ashby Spa

Our *blooming beautiful* garden was specially decorated to commemorate the 80th VE Day celebrations — even Paddington Bear joined in the fun!

In April, we hosted welcomed members from four local WIs to enjoy an inspiring and entertaining evening with Lesley Smith portraying Florence Nightingale. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Our darts team continues to perform well, and we're proud to share that our skittles team reached the semi-finals — a fantastic achievement!



At our March meeting, our secretary led a practical and calming session on meditation and mindfulness. We also held our annual

"Christine's Have-a-Go Crafty Challenge," which saw many wonderful entries under the theme of *"The Colour Yellow."* Congratulations to Elaine, this year's winner!

Creativity and compassion came together in our *Rings of Hope* mural, to which many of our members contributed. The mural now proudly hangs on the wall at Bright Hope Hospice. In support of the hospice, our coffee morning raised a wonderful £170. In another fantastic community effort, our members made 1,200 cheese and tomato cobs for participants in the Ashby 20 road race, helping raise £1,000 for various charities. Our annual coffee morning in aid of WALL collected many much-needed toiletries and raised £351.60.

### Grobby



The speaker at our March meeting was Sally Archer, a Trichologist and specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of hair and scalp conditions. Our hair is reflective of our general health and some of the things that will affect our hair are: hormones, severe stress, low iron stores, thyroid and other autoimmune disorders to name

but a few. Sally explained that although distressing, hair loss is never inevitable and that diligence and patience is required with treatments. On average we lose between 50 to 100 hairs every day and it is a myth that we lose more hair as we get older although it may get thinner.

Paul Read was our speaker at the April meeting and his subject was 'Reach For The Stars', a behind the scenes look at theatres. Paul has thirty years of experience in the theatre, and his role is principal dresser or as he put it 'keeper of secrets'. His main job is to get his actor on to the stage wearing the correct costume. The picture shows a tail suit with a difference! Paul demonstrated how, with the use of velcro,



elastic and magnets instead of buttons and zips, the tail suit can be removed in seconds. He would only be responsible for dressing one main actor in a production and this includes providing for all their needs before, during and after the performance. Most actors have a routine that they follow before a performance whether it be just sitting quietly or rocking gently. All costumes and accessories have to be checked carefully after each show for tears or damage. After his talk, going to the theatre now will be even more interesting!

### Glenfield Park

Our March meeting saw us joined by other WI branches in the Forest Group. There were 40 of us who were thoroughly educated and entertained by Baroness Bolsover.

It was the Duchess of Bedford in the 1840's who introduced us to afternoon tea. It was just a snack to carry the Duchess who was often hungry in the afternoon through to dinner. She began to invite her friends to join her and developed the concept of serving finger sandwiches and small cakes with the tea. Of course, we discussed whether the milk goes in first or second.



Then there was the discussion about the jam and cream and which goes first in your scone. We will leave that for Devon and Cornwall to decide. See what I mean about education. Overall we had a thoroughly enjoyable evening with this glamorously dressed lady who taught with great humour. Her talk was concluded with an afternoon tea buffet served of course with tea.

We made a presentation of a shrub for the garden of Val Lancaster as she retires from being the group treasurer for the last 20 years. Thank you Val.

Thanks too, go to Botcheston WI and Ratby WI for helping us with the arrangements throughout the evening, and to Glenfield for supplies and assistance.

# Around the Counties

## Ullesthorpe

Jane Isaac, a local author, was the speaker at our March meeting. She writes crime novels using Leicestershire and Northamptonshire as crime areas. Having a detective for a husband is also very helpful. Her books have been published in many languages and she is one of the best international crime fiction writers. Her popular series is about DCI Helen Lavey and a later one with DC Beth Camberlain. Well worth reading.

In April we welcomed Tim Hogarth Smith. Tim had been a hairdresser at many well-known shops, such as Browns of Chester and Fenwick in Newcastle. He became a hairstylist at The Haymarket in Leicester, then changed his career and went into wig making. He has worked for many theatrical companies making wigs for shows all over the country.

Wigs vary, they can be made from synthetic materials or real hair which is more expensive. He explained how they change a person's personality. He has made wigs for many famous actors and local stars at Kilworth and The Little Theatre in Leicester.

We had great fun trying the wigs on and surprised at how different people looked with a different style and colour.



## Oakham



We had an enjoyable April with our monthly meeting together with meetings of our book group and history group. In addition, sixteen members took part in a treasure trail at Barrowden. Pairs of members followed a trail which gave

information about the history of the village as well as posing questions about the interesting features seen.

After the treasure trail, lunch was enjoyed at the Exeter Arms in the village.

Members also took part in one of our regular social sixes. Members are randomly assigned to a group led by a committee member and meet for coffee and a chat at different cafes around Oakham. Finally some members braved the high winds to enjoy a walk from Burrough Court passing under John O Gaunt viaduct.



## Wing

The Wing Fly-Tyers, a group of local fishermen lead by Wing resident Ian Newsham, has been meeting regularly since 2001 to make the flies they hope will entice the fish.

WI members were invited to join the end of season meeting in the Village Hall in March to judge the keenly contested trophy competition to decide the "best" fly. Designs ranged from delicate to flamboyant with intriguing names: Hot Shrimp, Ace of Spades, Cats Whisker, and even the Humungous Boobies – a booby is actually a fish!

Wing Fly-Tyers taking part in the March for Clean Rivers in London recently were impressed by the very visible presence of the WI nationally. Later in the year Ian will be talking to us about the local River Welland and their group's application for funding to clean the river, making sure the water and surroundings are safe and healthy for all users.



## Newbold Verdon

We were entertained by Deborah at our April meeting. She is a poet who was influenced by Pam Ayes and Victoria Wood. She told us that she had obtained her Equity card by performing her poetry at many WI's. She had worked in the NHS in the ambulance service, recovered from mental health problems, and rode a motorbike. Her poetry was very good, mostly amusing, sometimes sad, but always enjoyable.

She had sent poems to the Princess of Wales and because she didn't want Prince William to be left out, sent one to him as well. She received thanks from each of them.

She ended with a song "You are my Sunshine" and some of us joined in. A very happy and enjoyable evening.



## Barrow

Clare Pearson joined us this evening to give a talk about her life & experiences working in both women's and men's prisons. After a field trip to Dartmoor prison, she was so inspired, she decided this was going to be her career choice. She was employed in ten prisons over twenty-two years, and governor of two. Clare gave us some facts and insights on prison life.

Men's prisons are rated into category A, B, C & D, with A being high security and D being an open prison. Women are categorised differently.

Clare's career started in Glen Parva Young Offenders Institution. A high number of offenders had been in the care system, some experiencing a disruptive life, which often lead them to offend at an early age. She explained her experiences in two different prisons, Belmarsh and Foston Hall.

Belmarsh is a high security male prison where safety and well-being were difficult to protect. Protection is a number one issue, so having enough staff makes safety easier to manage. On a more positive note, inmates are offered access to education, workshops and gyms, together with support groups often run by volunteers. Many prisoners turn to faith, initially to get them out of their cells but eventually giving them something to believe in.

Foston Hall, where Clare was a governor, is a women's prison in Derbyshire. Women do not wear uniforms unlike male prisoners.

Women have a difficult time with less contact from home. The role of the prison staff is to give them hope and a chance of a better life in the future. The aim is to educate, make them feel good about themselves and hopefully stop them reoffending.

Clare said she did form good relationships with some of the prisoners, especially the women, who often kept in touch with her when they had finished their sentence.

With her experience, she was approached in 2022 by Channel 4 to be a consultant for their new programme, "Banged up" about life behind the bars. It received a BAFTA nomination. She is currently working on another series about prison culture.

## Around the Counties

### Blackfordby



In May our village put on a 80th Anniversary of VE Day celebration in our local Church. As part of the celebrations Blackfordby WI were invited to take part.

We did a presentation of our 88 years and held a raffle themed for the event.

Blackfordby WI 'VE Day Celebration' Raffle with a Victory Day Food Hamper, Victory Day Pamper Hampers and a lovely bottle of Southern Comfort.

A big thank you to all the ladies from Blackfordby WI for donating all the lovely goodies in the hampers.

### Ullesthorpe



Our May meeting fell on VE day, so we decided to celebrate. The resolution was discussed and voted on. We welcomed Mandy Cutler to our meeting and then celebrated with a lovely afternoon of tea and cake.

There were many memories to talk about and music from 1940s to listen to.

The cakes were decorated with fruit to look like Union Jacks. The hall was decorated with bunting and flags.

We had collected goods for the local food and hygiene banks and these were later distributed. All part of our celebration day.

We finished off with a plant auction . Plants from some gardens going to fill others .

A very memorable afternoon.



If you have any News that you wish to be included in County News, please forward any articles to **WI House** by email: [fedsec@lrfwi.org](mailto: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.

It is lovely to read all your reports from your meetings, however please be aware that we sometimes need to edit articles. We have limited space and we try to keep the *Around the Counties* articles to 120 words and 2 photos, preferably including members. Try not to give too much away about the talk so others that have the speaker can be surprised. We also do not print details of future meetings as often these happen before County News is circulated and so we can include as many as possible and save paper, ink and postage costs. County News will be emailed and posted on Wednesday of the third full week of the month.

There is Photograph Guidance on the website—please follow this link for more information: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/Publicising-your-WI/resources-and-guidance/photography-guidance>



# Advertisements

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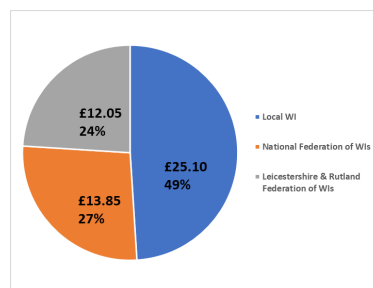
## Subscriptions

### SUBS REMINDER

Subscriptions rates are set by the NFWI Board of Trustees each year and your fee supports the running of the 3 tiers of the WI – National (NFWI), the Leicestershire and Rutland Federation and your WI.

Total subscription	WI share	Federation share	NFWI share
<b>£51.00</b>	£25.10	£12.05	£13.85

WIs can apply the **flexibility policy** to the WI share of the subscription.



**Dual members** will pay the WI portion only to their second WI. If the WI is not utilising the flexibility policy, this will be £25.10.

**Payments** are due from members in **April 2025**.

### Pro-rata subscriptions for new members

A new member joining the WI for the first time (or who has not been a member of any WI for 12 months before joining the WI) pays a pro-rata subscription. This depends when she joins as shown below:

### Date of joining 2025/26

### Total Subscription Rate

1 April to 30 June	£51
1 July to 30 Sept	£38.25
1 Oct to 31 Dec	£25.50
1 Jan to 31 Mar 2026	£12.75

### What does my membership include?

- A welcoming place to make friends and participate in activities.
- 8 issues of WI Life magazine
- Monthly NFWI newsletter on email.
- 11 meetings.
- The opportunity to involve yourself in exciting local and national campaigns.
- Bespoke member only events held virtually and at venues around the country.
- Member's book of discount offers.
- Training opportunities such as becoming a WI Adviser or Climate Ambassador.
- The option to be a WI committee member, a federation trustee and/or an NFWI trustee.
- Access to My WI.
- WI Learning Hub, with access to many free courses.
- The opportunity to meet like-minded women from different backgrounds.
- A place for self-expression – each WI is unique and shaped by its members.