

Book Now – Last Chance to Join Our FREE First Aid Courses

This year, thanks to the Federation successfully securing a **Denman Grant**, we have been able to offer members an exciting programme of **FREE training** across the county. The grant has enabled us to organise and fully fund **three Mental Health First Aid Champion courses**, delivered by **Mind**, and **six Physical First Aid courses**, delivered by the **British Red Cross**.



The response has been fantastic, with members describing the courses as informative, engaging and confidence-building. Participants have praised the knowledgeable and supportive trainers, the practical hands-on learning, and the invaluable skills gained to help others in an emergency or support someone experiencing poor mental health.

One member who attended the Mental Health First Aid course said they left with *"a deeper understanding of mental health, greater confidence in approaching someone who may need support, and clearer knowledge of the services available."* Another member who attended the British Red Cross course commented that they *"left feeling positive and reassured. Not only did this training teach practical skills, it also gave me the confidence to help should a real-life emergency happen."* We have also received feedback from WIs who have shared what they learnt with fellow members, encouraging others to take advantage of these opportunities.

There are now **just three courses remaining**:

- **12 September** – Mental Health First Aid Champion, **Quorn**
- **17 September** – Physical First Aid, **Hinckley**
- **7 October** – Physical First Aid, **Oakham**



These courses are **free of charge** to members thanks to the Denman Grant, and it is unlikely that another opportunity to attend this training free of charge will be available in the near future. **Members attending can also claim mileage expenses in line with Federation expenses guidance**, making these courses even more accessible.



Places are **limited** and **booking is essential**. If you would like to attend, please contact **WI House** as soon as possible to register your interest and secure your place.

Federation Chairman Glenice Wignall glenicewignall@lrfwi.org	Federation Treasurer Mary Hobbs maryhobbs@lrfwi.org	Federation Secretary Lois Mckinder fedsec@lrfwi.org	Office Assistant Ruth Bass wihouse@lrfwi.org	Finance 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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Find us on Facebook: Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of WIs



From the Board



The Board continues to work hard on your behalf, meeting every month to discuss Federation business, develop new opportunities for members and plan exciting events for the year ahead.

Planning for our 2027 Annual Council Meeting is already well underway, and we are busy securing speakers who will inform, inspire and entertain our members. We know how important this event is and are working hard to put together a programme that is engaging, exciting and well worth attending.

As soon as our speakers and programme have been confirmed, we will share all the details with you, so keep an eye on future newsletters and Federation

communications.

In the meantime, please save the date in your diary:

Saturday 6 March 2027 at Leicester Grammar School

We look forward to welcoming you for another memorable Annual Council Meeting and thank you for your continued support of the Federation.

We are also looking for volunteer stewards to help on the day. As a thank you for your support, stewards receive a reduced ticket price. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact fedsec@lrfwi.org.

Glenice Wignall

Chairman Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of WI

From the House



We are delighted to announce that **Ruth Bass** officially joined the WI House team in **July** as our new **Administrative Assistant**.

Many of you may already know Ruth, as she is a member of **Hathern WI** and also serves on our **Arts & Crafts Committee**, where she enjoys putting her creativity to good use.

Ruth has settled into her new role exceptionally well and will be supporting the Federation by managing **event bookings**, alongside a variety of other administrative duties. She has already become a valued member of the WI House team, and we are pleased to have her on board.

I hope you will all join us in giving Ruth a very warm welcome to WI House. We wish her every success in her new role and look forward to introducing her to more of our members over the coming months.

Thank you

Denman Trust Grant—Free First Aid Courses

Date	Course	Venue		FREE TO WI MEMBERS
Saturday 12th September	Mental Health First Aid Champion	Church Rooms, Quorn	6 places filled 10 vacant	Normally, £115.63 per person
Thursday 17th September	(Physical) First Aid Course for Adults	Mary Forryan Centre, Hinckley	Over subscribed	Normally, £35 per person
Wednesday 7th October	(Physical) First Aid Course for Adults	All Saints Church, Oakham	5 places filled 7 vacant	Normally, £35 per person

There are 3 remaining first aid courses to run as part of the Denman Grant initiative.

As you can see for the above table, at the time of writing, there are still places available on the 12th September for Mental Health First Aid and on the 7th October for physical first aid.

MHFA Champion Course



Excellent quality training

The senior trainer (working for MIND) Paol Stuart- Thomson is excellent – knowledgeable, personable, and willing to share his own experiences.

100% of participants at Hinckley indicated they would recommend the course to others and feedback also showed a big confidence and knowledge uplift

MHFA Champion Course at Hinckley

Why should I attend?

The One-Day MHFA awareness and skills course qualifies you as an Adult MHFA Champion and will teach you to:

Recognise the main signs and symptoms of common mental health issues

Provide initial support

Guide a person towards appropriate professional help

Be mindful of your own wellbeing

Develop an understanding of how you can create and maintain a healthier workforce or community

- Knowledge and confidence to advocate for mental health awareness

Skills to support positive wellbeing



Why not become a mental health first aid ambassador for your WI?

BritishRedCross

The course equips you with a pool of resources that you can share with others – including some very useful websites. So, you can point others in the right direction if they need some support. All participants receive a certificate of attendance.



Physical First Aid for Adults Course

It is a tightly paced course, condensing a wide range of first aid treatments (about 16), Delivery is through discussion, information, and practical sessions.

The quality of tuition is good. There are no tests to pass on this course as the emphasis is on awareness.

All participants are given a First Aid Workbook and Certificate of First Aid Learning.

First Aid Training for Adults at Market Harborough

Chris and Jane of Illston-on-the-Hill WI attended the physical first aid course run by the British Red Cross at Uppingham and here is their report.

Bystanders can be life Savers

The aim of the course was to give people confidence to attempt first aid as they may be the only person on hand to help. Even though you thought you couldn't put a large heavy person in the recovery position, once you'd been shown the correct way it was easy!

We were challenged to deal with patients suffering from heavy bleeding, head injuries, unresponsive and not breathing, possible strokes and many other scenarios. Sometimes we played the patient and at other times the 'rescuer'.

It was quite a relief when coffee time came round – complete with chocolate biscuits! However, afterwards there was more work to do and more patients to deal with, including heart attacks, severe allergic reactions, burns, choking and many more situations.

Whilst it was not easy to fit a 3-day first aid course into 4 hours, most of the basics were covered and we were even shown that the defibrillator tells us exactly what to do. Rest assured ladies of Illston, we were feeling pretty confident!

We were also told about "what3words". This can be invaluable if you are out walking, climbing or in the countryside as you can give the emergency services your three-word location enabling them to locate you precisely. Well worth looking into. The app assigns every 3m square in the world a unique combination of three random words.

Our thanks go to Uppingham WI for hosting the event.

How to book a free place on these courses

Flyers about the above courses are released 3 months prior to the course date. If you would like to book for a free place, please contact your WI Secretary or email wihouse@lrfwi.org with a booking form.

The federation will pay up to £10 in travel expenses.

In return, we ask that for your own WI and a neighbouring WI, you either:

do a write up about your experiences **or**

you can request that you talk briefly to WI members about your experiences

Membership Committee

The LRFWI Membership Committee is responsible for assisting WIs with any help they require. I hope you find the following items useful. Mandy Cutler, Membership Committee Chair.

Federation Quiz



Our Federation Quiz, on Friday 3rd July, was a great event – a really enjoyable evening. Final winning scores across the 4 venues were remarkably close.

Congratulations to Sheri Evans, Sylvie Raven, Margaret Hall and Gillian Hester aka the Oakham Ospreys, from Oakham WI. They are the overall winners this year with a score of 73 points; they played at [Loddington](#).

Above the Oakham Ospreys - overall winners with 73 points.



At [Botcheston](#), the winning team was the Stokers with 65 points - yes, from Stoke Golding!

Top photo in collage, left to right: Lesley Gent, Jean Buckby, Paul Whiteman and Sue Mottram.



At [Swinford](#), the winning team was Carpe Diem, from Swinford WI, with 65 points. **Bottom left photo in collage , left to right: Steve Smith, Carole Smith, Jackie Clapham and Brian Clapham.**

At [Thorpe Acre](#) the winning team was **Hathern Doves, from Hathern WI, with 66 points . **Bottom right photo in collage**, left to right Jill Johnson, Ann Clark,**

Lesley Swanwick and Gail Wooliscroft.

A big thank you to all our host WIs this year – Botcheston, Loddington, Swinford and Thorpe Acre – for their help and providing delicious refreshments. Thanks also to the scorers who have to work so hard to keep pace with the rounds of questions.

We are looking for WIs to help us by hosting a venue in 2027. If you are able, please talk to the Membership Committee for more details. It is always on the first Friday in July so please get in touch.

Email: mandycutler@lrfwi.com

WI Life magazine online – including audio version



In case you're not aware, the WI Life magazine is available online on the My WI website.

Just go to the very bottom of the Homepage and you will see a link for My WI. Click on this and it will bring up various issues of the magazine – click on the one you want.

Simply select [Click to view in full screen](#) on the issue you want and the arrows to turn forward or back the page.

You can also select the [audio version of the latest issue of WI Life Magazine](#).

Finance House & Management

As the summer draws to a close, many of you will now be turning your attention to your WI's financial year-end.

Treasurers within the Federation who have requested an Independent Financial Examiner (IFE) will be contacted in due course. WIs are, of course, welcome to appoint their own Independent Financial Examiner; however, **all WIs must have their accounts independently examined.**



Please also remember:

- **Pro-rata subscriptions** apply to new members joining between **July and September**.
- **Dual (multi) members** pay the same rate as the WI share.
- **New members** pay the NFWI subscription, Federation share and insurance.

If your WI is organising additional events for members, attendees **must make a contribution towards the cost.** These events cannot be provided free of charge, even if the WI has healthy funds.

All WI funds must be used in line with the **charitable objectives of the WI** and must **not** be used to support outside organisations.

If you have any questions regarding your year-end accounts, please email maryhobbs@lrfwi.org.

Finally, a reminder that **the committee has collective responsibility for the financial management of the WI.**

Leisure Committee



The guided walk at Ashby-de-la-Zouch with our excellent usual guide, Steve, was very informative. Many of us were a bit chilly at the start as there was quite a breeze and we had got used to not taking a cardigan everywhere with the incessant heatwaves. We were thrilled to see Ashby's latest resident relaxing on a bench at the top of the town – a photo opportunity must-have for the grandchildren. Go and take a look!

Poor Steve was a little daunted by our en masse road-crossing methods but the drivers were very kind and many stopped to allow us to cross, although they did seem a little bemused at our number! Ashby-de-la-Zouch is reputedly the furthest town from the sea in England but we were disappointed that Steve had run out of time and wasn't able to give us his rendering of 'Ashby de la Zouch by the sea'. Google it – it really does exist.

Monthly Draw

Congratulations to our July Monthly Draw winners!

May 2026

1st Prize £25 Angela Dalman - Cossington WI

2nd Prize—£15 Sandra Meakin—Waltham on the Wolds WI

3rd Prize £10 Carolyn Wing—Wing WI

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



Events — What's On?

2026:

Thursday 3rd September—Treasurer's Training, WI House, 135 Loughborough Road LE45LQ—£5

Saturday 12th September— Mental Health First Aid Champion, Church Rooms, Quorn, Loughborough, LE12 8DP—Free

Thursday 17th September— (Physical) First Aid Course for adults, Mary Forryan Centre, St Peters Catholic Church, Leicester Rd, Hinckley LE10 1LW—Free

Saturday 19th September—Lampshade Making, WI House, 135 Loughborough Road, LE4 5LQ—£25

Saturday 3rd October — Embroidery Workshop, WI House, 135 Loughborough Road, LE4 5LQ—£25

Wednesday 7th October— (Physical) First Aid Course for adults, All Saints Church, Church Street, Oakham, LE15 6AA.—Free

Saturday 10th October—Autumn Lunch, Devonshire Place, 78 London Road, Leicester LE2 0RA—£34

Monday 26th October—Ghost Walk, Frankie and Bennys, St Peters Square LE14SA —£10 (**FULL**)

Tuesday 27th October— Ghost Walk, Frankie and Bennys, St Peters Square LE14SA —£10

Thursday 29th October— Speakers Showcase, Goodwood Bowls Club, 8A Crofters Drive, Leicester LE5 2FH—£2.50

Saturday 7th November— Autumn Dabble Day, The Langton Village Hall LE8 0PJ—£25

Saturday 28th November— Stratford Christmas Market, Coaches from WI House, Burbage & Oakham—£20

2027:

18th January —22nd January —Annual Holiday to Cricket St Thomas. Price Varies, **only Twin and Double Rooms available.**

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 or call 0116 2661342.

Booking forms can be downloaded from the website or requested by emailing wihouse@lrfwi.org. Please don't wait until the closing date to book, as events can fill up before the deadline.

If you are paying by BACS, please notify finance@lrfwi.org once payment has been made.

Please note that cancellations after the closing date cannot be refunded; however, your place can be transferred to another member.

Please do not turn up to events without a confirmed booking from federation

"ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY" QUIZ 2026

I'm really so delighted to report that you all seemed to really enjoy this one. I had 159 entries returned, and out of these, 58 were all correct. The first of these drawn at random belonged to a brand new quizzier, Alison of Nailstone WI who has received her £25 prize - well done Alison! Well done to Nailstone too since they have never had a winner before.

If you sent an SAE or gave an email address with your entry, your paper or the answers have been returned to you. Do remember that even if you don't complete your quiz sheet, it's always worth sending it in to me with an email address or an SAE because that way I will always respond with the answers after the closing date. You should send it in anyway with a £1 coin attached if you are on my Subscribers' list of course.

Here are the answers:

1. THE RAILWAY CHILDREN; 2. WARHORSE; 3. THE SECRET SEVEN; 4. ALFIE; 5. THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR; 6. CHARLOTTE'S WEB; 7. ALICE IN WONDERLAND; 8. THE GRUFFALO; 9. THE SECRET GARDEN; 10. THE WIZARD OF OZ; 11. SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON; 12. LITTLE WOMEN; 13. TREASURE ISLAND; 14. SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS; 15. DISCWORLD; 16. WIND IN THE WILLOWS; 17. THE HOBBIT; 18. HARRY POTTER; 19. THE CAT IN THE HAT; 20. THE LITTLE PRINCE; 21. GANGSTA GRANNY; 22. WINNIE THE POOH; 23. GOOD WIVES; 24. HIS DARK MATERIALS; 25. HEIDI; 26. GULLIVER'S TRAVELS; 27. ROOM ON THE BROOM; 28. BFG; 29. THE FAMOUS FIVE; 30. THE WORST WITCH; 31. THE JOLLY POSTMAN; 32. JUST WILLIAM; 33. NANCY DREW; 34. BLACK BEAUTY; 35. WATERSHIP DOWN; 36. PEACE AT LAST; 37. THE JUNGLE BOOK; 38. DOGGER; 39. MAGIC FARAWAY TREE; 40. GOODNIGHT MISTER (MR) TOM; 41. HARDY BOYS; 42. RUBERT BEAR; 43. MARY POPPINS; 44. PADDINGTON; 45. THE SHEEP PIG; 46. THE SNOWMAN; 47. ON THE PRAIRIE; 48. NOUGHTS AND CROSSES; 49. FLAT STANLEY; 50. TOM SAWYER.

Sitting Comfortably quiz made a magnificent £431 for County Funds, so thank you all my loyal quizzers for your support, especially my dear friend Hilary who sold over 200 copies at the ACM in March, and to those of you around our two counties who continue to sell further copies to your fellow members and friends.

There will be a new quiz out on 14th September called "All Tooled Up" so look out for that.

If you're not on my Quiz Subscribers' List but would like to be, just send me an email to: suelobb@lrfwi.org, headed up: "Quiz Subscribers", and I'll tell you how it works. Additionally, if you are down at WI House, you can always pick up a copy in Reception and put a £1 in the jar.

Love and best wishes as ever to all you quizzers and quiz sellers out there, I couldn't do it without your dedicated support.

Sue Lobb

Around the Counties

Woodhouse Eaves WI

After our May business meeting was concluded we were very lucky to have a hands-on craft workshop organised by Marlene Frisby and WI friends. After instructions on how to get started we were let loose on a wonderful array of materials from which to make a little gift box. We first chose a piece of marked up card and then decorations ranging from wooden shapes to tissue flowers and butterflies, ready-made flowers, sparkling beads, ribbons etc! A lovely relaxed and engaged time ensued while everyone cut out card, glued, hole-punched and threaded ribbon etc. One member was heard to remark that they had not felt "as relaxed as this all day". The resulting boxes could not have been more varied from very simple but effective designs to much more intricate ones they all looked wonderful. One person, having seen the colours she especially needed for a card she wished to make, requested to be allowed to do so and she too left the evening very satisfied having produced a unique and very special card



Clarendon Park WI

The new WI year started well with a visit from Paul Read who spoke about his life as a dresser to the stars. Bringing a selection of costumes he entertained us with exciting stories of life behind the scenes of theatre production and the secrets of quick costume change needed in London plays and musicals. An absorbing peak behind the scenes of popular theatre.

After a successful Beetle Drive in May our June meeting saw us setting sail for a river cruise on the Trent. Combining our annual meal with our annual trip the 26 of us made a short visit to the Grange garden centre in Asfordby on our way to Colwick in Nottingham for a 3 hour trip on the river including a two course lunch.

Starting and ending the day in showers we were blessed with perfect weather inbetween for our trip on the Princess River Cruise. After our lunch we took to the upper deck to relax in the sunshine as we revelled in the peaceful river life, travelling under a variety of bridges and listening to the informative commentary on route.

It was a lovely unrushed day for chatting and enjoying each others company while enjoying the scenery and river wildlife.

We look forward to meeting again in July and our varied programme for 26/27.



Wing WI

Speaker: Dr Monica Maparanyanga (Wing Member)

"How Did I Get Here? – Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover"

Members were privileged to hear an inspiring and deeply personal talk from our own member, Dr Monica Maparanyanga. Through sharing key moments from her remarkable life journey, Monica encouraged us to look beyond first impressions and remember that everyone has a unique story worth hearing.

Her presentation explored themes of resilience, compassion, inclusion and overcoming adversity, leaving members moved and reflecting on the importance of treating everyone with kindness and understanding.

Monica's story is both powerful and uplifting, and she is available to share this inspiring talk with other WI groups and community organisations.

Having previously had a talk and demonstration of fly-tying by the Welland Mayfly Fishers, Wing WI members were invited to join the fishermen in a picnic by the River Welland at Harringworth. On one of the hottest days of the year



several members enjoyed an afternoon with a difference. After we tucked into tasty refreshments, one of the fishermen showed us how they monitor the water quality for the

Environment Agency, taking samples which included some interesting beasties. The more intrepid WI members performed interesting manoeuvres as they struggled into full wading gear and, guided by the experts, tried their hand at catching fish. Then, in time honoured fashion, they told us all about the "one that got away".

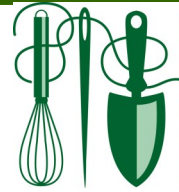
Like the WI, local fishing societies such as this are very involved with the campaign for Cleaner Water and we hope that our combined efforts may indeed lead to a much-needed improvement of water quality all over the country.



Around the Counties

Country Markets

Glenfield Country Market has been trading for 50 years in 2026 (including with an 'order and collect' service through Covid) and we would like to invite you all to come to celebrate with us. We will be holding special events each Friday during September to include Market Bingo, a Tombola, tea and cake, and 70's style dress. Please come along and see what we have to offer. There will be our usual home made cakes and preserves, hand made crafts and locally grown plants and produce. Admission is free and money raised from the tombola and bingo will go to local charities. We meet at St Peter's Church Hall, Glenfield, LE3 8DP from 9am – 11am every Friday. Hope to see you there! For more information please email Susan on glenfieldmarket@gmail.com



**COUNTRY
MARKETS**
COOK • CRAFT • GROW

Blackfordby WI

Our Village has just had its Annual Open Gardens - 6th & 7th June. A two day event which saw around 250 visitors to the village.

Blackfordby WI was asked to do the refreshments for the event. Our ladies did a great job serving homemade cake and drinks.



Blackfordby Craft Group which includes many of our WI ladies made door wreaths today. We all wanted them for different reasons, Autumn, a wreath to be displayed in a bedroom and mine was always going to be for Halloween.

The main picture shows our finished wreaths, which we did today, except I hadn't finished mine so did it when I got home.



Loughborough Ladies WI



At our June meeting, members enjoyed an entertaining talk by **Jo Golby**, who arrived dressed as a lady's maid to present *Top to Toe*. Jo explained how ladies' maids collected herbs and plants to make beauty remedies,

sharing some surprising fashions and treatments from the past. Members were amazed to learn that stale urine was once used to bleach hair, while Queen Elizabeth I's famous pale complexion came from a lead-based cosmetic that may have contributed to her death. The fashion for tiny waists, created with tightly laced stays reinforced by whalebone, often caused serious internal damage. Jo's lively presentation had everyone laughing while learning about the extraordinary lengths people went to in the name of beauty.

In July, **Dave Andrews** entertained members with a nostalgic look at the history of the BBC. Beginning with the early days of radio, he guided us through memorable moments including Neville Chamberlain's wartime announcement, the late Queen's coronation, Richard Dimbleby's famous spaghetti tree April Fool's broadcast, the 1966 World Cup Final, the first episode of *Doctor Who*, and classic television favourites. Dave's photographs, video clips and fascinating stories sparked many happy memories, making it an enjoyable evening for everyone.

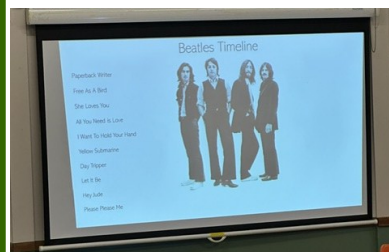


Little Bowden WI

For our June meeting, Little Bowden welcomed Phil Jesson, a volunteer DJ at HFM and lovely husband of one of our members, who gave us a musical trip down memory lane via a hugely entertaining quiz. From a trip around the world guessing the locations of tracks as we travelled, moving swiftly onto a round featuring flowers in the song where either the artist or band name was missing, to bands with colours in their title saw most teams turning in respectable scores.... Then came a round named 'alcohol', which you would think would be easy - for most, this was not the case, sending the room into much laughter when answers were disclosed! Musical Duos and then Family Band Members proved to be nearly as challenging with teams performing slightly better with Famous Intros. And then finally, The Beatles - a list of tracks to be put into the right order of release rounded off the quiz. Great fun was



had by all, with us leaving knowing a little more than at the start. Another fabulous evening with lovely ladies. Thank you very much Mr J!



Around the Counties

Anstey WI

Members of Anstey WI and their families enjoyed a boat trip with the Baldwin Trust. Despite the unsettled weather, everyone appreciated the beautiful scenery and spotted a variety of waterfowl, including several with their young.



At the June meeting, members welcomed guest speaker Jean Brown, who gave a fascinating talk on the history of quilting and patchwork. Jean explained how quilting was originally used for warmth and protection, even beneath metal armour, while patchwork developed as a practical way to repair worn quilts.

The highlight of the evening was Jean's stunning collection of handmade quilts. From sampler and baby quilts to an intricate kaleidoscope design, each piece showcased remarkable craftsmanship and creativity. Members thoroughly enjoyed seeing the quilts up close.

Special thanks were given to Sheryl Bramley and her friend Sue Crook, who interrupted their holiday to help with the meeting. The competition for a piece of patchwork or quilting was won by Sheila Timms with a novelty chicken made from log cabin squares. Jan Darby was second, while Liz Heggs and Jill Taras shared third place.

July saw Anstey WI hold its annual garden party in June Roe's garden. Despite the extreme heat, June's son and daughter worked tirelessly to erect a large gazebo, providing welcome shade. Although attendance was lower than usual, members enjoyed refreshments and the chance to socialise. June and her daughter Sue were presented with flowers in appreciation of their hospitality, with thanks also extended to June's son and granddaughter for all their hard work.

Thurnby Bushby WI

June's meeting welcomed **Jed Jaggard**, who gave a fascinating talk on the "Real Dad's Army" and the history of the Home Guard. Dressed in full uniform, he brought the subject to life by passing around guns, helmets, medals and other memorabilia, making for an engaging and informative evening. Members agreed he was an excellent speaker.

In July, members enjoyed a visit to nearby Stoughton Village, once part of the Thurnby and Bushby WI area. Local resident Liz gave an interesting talk in the church, tracing the village's history from the 12th century to the present day, including Stoughton Grange and the Co-op's purchase of local farms. After a delicious cream tea, members used Liz's guide to explore the village's listed buildings, with the thriving community allotments proving a particular highlight.

Barrow upon Soar WI



Our May Birthday Party meeting opened with the Resolutions Vote. Our dress code for the evening and Monthly competition was 'Think Yeehaw!' ALL of the ladies attending wore at least one western

themed item. The room was also decorated in a Western Sun Flowered Theme in keeping with our 'Calendar Girls 2026 Programme', as we entered the room we found out our 'Cowgirl Name' which caused some hilarity & there was also a Photo booth so our Ladies could pose with various props and of course Sunflowers!

Our entertainment for the night, which was great fun was provided by Samantha and her team from '**Rhythm n Boots Line Dancing**' who, in an hour demonstrated *four* Line Dances – with a lot of Patience! And It didn't matter if you turned the wrong way or forgot what you should have been doing – Grapevining instead of stamping your cowboy booted feet. After the fourth dance we were expected to then return to the first dance and dance it again! All of the ladies said they thoroughly enjoyed the experience! After singing Happy Birthday to US and eating a lovely selection of Birthday Cakes made by our Committee Bakery it was time to hang up our cotton pickin' Cowboy hats n rootin' tootin' boots and head on back to the homesteads.

Illston On The Hill WI

On a damp Thursday evening, sixteen members visited the University of Leicester Botanic Garden for a fascinating guided tour of its beautiful 16-acre site. Our guide explained the history of the gardens, which were originally located on the university's main campus before moving to their present location as the university expanded.

We learnt how to read the botanical labels on the trees, discovering their names, origins and ages, with some dating back over 100 years from the original private gardens. The picturesque pond area has retained its original design and is home to colourful koi carp, while visiting herons and kingfishers help keep their numbers in check.

The greenhouses were filled with an impressive collection of cacti, temperate plants and a magnificent Stag Horn Fern. We also visited the developing world vegetable garden, which has replaced the former fuchsia garden and will eventually be open to the public.

Around the Counties

Gopsall Villages

In a change from our usual format, at our meeting in June, Yuko Dixon gave us an introduction to Japanese cookery. Yuko began by telling us fascinating facts about Japan, and how she had wanted to bring Japanese cookery to the UK when she moved here over 20 years ago. Then, with the aid of two nervous volunteers, Yuko showed us how to make two types of makizushi - thin bite-sized rolls with a dried seaweed or nori wrapper.



Yuko had brought all the prepared ingredients with her; smoked salmon for one type of roll and precooked, flavoured tofu as a vegetarian option, together with precooked sticky rice, aubergines, carrots, green beans and mooli (daikon radish), and raw cucumber. We learnt how to cool the rice with a fan before gently layering it on the seaweed outer casing. After we had chosen and added our fillings, Yuko helped us to roll and squeeze our creations using a bamboo sushi rolling mat. Luckily, only Yuko made a uramaki (inside-out sushi) by flipping over the rice covered seaweed before filling it!! At the end of the demonstration, everyone tucked into a delicious supper.

Witherley WI

Despite poor weather, the St Giles Book Sale, Tea and Cakes event was a great success, raising **£367.50**. Thanks were extended to Nina and Pat R for hosting.



Nina shared the delegate's report from the online NFWI Annual Meeting. Members heard about the three inspirational speakers and the successful passing of both resolutions, with 95% support for Accessible Public Toilet Facilities and 93% for Action on Women's Homelessness. Next year's Annual Meeting will be held in person on 3 June 2027.

Members were reminded of upcoming events, including the St Giles Hospice Lunch and *Anything Goes* at Kilworth House. Final details for the Harvington Hall outing on 5 August will be circulated nearer the time.

Exciting plans are underway for the WI's 60th Birthday Party in October. A successful £500 WANA grant will help subsidise the buffet, with members paying £10 each.

Guest speakers Angie Spencer and Eddie Smallwood gave a fascinating presentation about Angie's symbolic painting of Richard III, currently displayed at the Richard III Exhibition in Leicester.

The evening concluded with refreshments, thanks to Jackie A, Margaret B, Siobhan N and Alison T.

Glenfield WI

Members enjoyed an entertaining afternoon with author **Hamish Whitely**, who shared readings from his collection of short stories inspired by his childhood and his two grandmothers. Reflecting on his move to Leicester in 1969, Hamish spoke about his teaching career, writing plays for his pupils, and creating the popular *Harry Knuckles* detective stories for *The Leicester Mercury*, some of which were also broadcast on BBC Radio 4. His warm storytelling, from humorous tales of Grandma's battle against household draughts to touching childhood memories, made for a memorable afternoon.



Glenfield WI also celebrated the 100th birthday of long-standing member **Ruby**, who has belonged to the WI since June 1959. She delighted members by bringing along her original membership card, showing the annual subscription was just 3/6. A traditional cream tea was enjoyed, with musical entertainment from Mary Starrie on the piano. After everyone sang *Happy Birthday*, Ruby cut her birthday cake, which was shared by all.

Mary was also presented with flowers and a card to mark her forthcoming 90th birthday, and the floral table centres were raffled, with six lucky members taking one home.

The August meeting will feature a speaker from Take Heart Leicester, the adult cardiac support group based at Glenfield Hospital, while September will see the return of Carolyn Boulter for a craft afternoon. Visitors are always welcome.

Newbold Verdon WI

Members enjoyed two lively and entertaining meetings. At one, Julie delighted everyone with a programme of songs from the 1960s and 1970s, encouraging members to sing along and even get up and dance. Some took to the floor for a jive, while others enjoyed doing the Twist to Chubby Checker's famous hit. Her rendition of *I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts* had everyone laughing and joining in, making it a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

At the following meeting, Steffanie Mee shared fascinating stories about appearing on numerous television game shows, including *Bob's Full House*, *Tipping Point*, *The Weakest Link* and *Pointless*. Members were delighted to see the famous *Pointless* trophy, which Steffanie brought along. The evening concluded with a fun quiz, with the winning team taking home a box of Celebrations. It was another excellent evening enjoyed by all.



Around the Counties

Ullesthorpe WI

Following a successful plant auction, members welcomed Susie Lickman from Windowsill Plant Shop in Market Harborough to share her tips on caring for houseplants without the stress.

A passionate plant enthusiast, Susie explained that healthy houseplants are all about choosing the right location. She encouraged members to consider the direction their windows face and the quality of light before deciding where to place a plant. Other useful advice included avoiding overwatering and overfeeding, and using rainwater or distilled water where possible.

Susie admitted to owning nearly 100 houseplants, including many she has rescued from sale shelves and brought back to life. Her enthusiasm was infectious, and members thoroughly enjoyed her lively and informative presentation. Many left inspired, with new plants in hand and plenty of tips to put into practice. Susie even inspected the competition table entries and joked that she might have to return to check they were being looked after properly!



Sheepy WI

Have you ever wondered what it takes to dress the stars? Members of Sheepy WI found out during an entertaining talk by Paul Read, who shared fascinating insights into life behind the scenes in London's West End theatres.



Paul explained that his role involves far more than helping actors into costume. He is also a tailor, shopper, confidant and problem-solver, ensuring performers are ready to take to the stage. He described how costumes help bring characters to life while allowing actors to move freely and complete lightning-fast costume changes, sometimes in just 10 seconds.

Members also enjoyed hearing about the realities of working backstage in historic theatres, including the challenges of old buildings, unexpected encounters with rats and mice, and some amusing stories about the famous actors and actresses he has worked with over the years.

The evening was full of humour, fascinating anecdotes and behind-the-scenes secrets, leaving everyone with a new appreciation for the work that goes into every theatre production. Sheepy WI would highly recommend Paul Read to other WIs looking for an entertaining and memorable speaker.

Wigston Magna WI

Our speaker for June was Richard Warren who did a presentation on "The Streets of Leicester".

Richard, a retired policeman who was based at Charles Street, told us about medieval Leicester which was surrounded by old Roman walls. Northgate, Eastgate, Westgate and Southgate were the main entrances into the town. He explained how the streets got their names. The Danes and Saxons integrated and a new language was formed. Words ending in "by" means "local" eg Blaby and words ending in "gate" mean "street". Cheapside came from the Danish word "chepe" which means sell. Cank Street was named after a public well where ladies used to congregate for a chat. Cank is the Danish word for chattering. He told us about many more street names and how they came about and our members really enjoyed learning about the history of their city.



In other news our Treasurer Karen did the "Pretty Muddy Mud Run" and raised a fantastic £320 for cancer research. Well done Karen.

Leire WI



At our recent meeting, we welcomed Jo Golby who gave an authentic historical account of the life and role of a lady's maid, which was not always as we had seen on TV in Downton Abbey, for example, a lady's maid never wore black and white or waited on tables! Jo's talk focussed on her mistress, Lady Mary Curzon an American who married an English Aristocrat from Derbyshire in 1895. Lord and Lady Grantham of Downton Abbey were based on this couple. We heard amusing stories of how Mary learnt about fashion and hair and how the women navigated the wearing of challenging garments. Ladies wore 6 outfits in a day. Jo also demonstrated the language of the fan when attracting or rejecting male company! It was very entertaining with Jo's various accents adding to the drama.

Around the Counties

Hinckley Canalside WI



In May, members welcomed John Langham for his talk, **"How Listening to Music Has Changed,"** which took everyone on a nostalgic journey through the history of recorded music. Drawing on his experience at BBC Radio Leicester, John explained how people listened to music over the years, from phonographs and music boxes to radios, gramophones and radiograms.

He spoke about the arrival of the first record charts in 1952, the popularity of jukeboxes, and the launch of *Top of the Pops* in 1964. Members were fascinated to learn that The Beatles earned just 1p per record sold when they first started, while many artists today rely on live performances for much of their income.

John also displayed an impressive collection of vintage music equipment, including a treasured phonogram that had belonged to his grandparents. His photographs and memorabilia brought back many happy memories.



In June, members enjoyed a floral demonstration by N.A.F.A.S. demonstrator Alison Suffolk. She created three stunning arrangements using a variety of flowers, including gerberas, roses, chrysanthemums, proteas and foliage, while sharing practical tips on floral design and care.

At the end of the demonstration, the arrangements were raffled, with three lucky members taking them home. Alison's enthusiasm, creativity and expertise made for an enjoyable and informative afternoon that was appreciated by everyone.

Thringstone WI

At Thringstone WI we celebrated our 30th Anniversary with founding members, also celebrating one of our members 90th Birthday. Helen our President of over 20 years shared our history of Thringstone WI, first mentioned in 1912. The next mention was in 1926, and from 1936 until 1968 a Mrs Westgate ran the group. Our current Thringstone WI which is fully affiliated started in 1996. We enjoyed the play list of the music of 1996. Couldn't end the evening without the top dance of 1996 The Macarena being demonstrated ended our special night with smiles, memories, and enjoyment of togetherness.



Groby WI

In May, members enjoyed a variety of activities. Twelve members took a five-hour narrowboat trip with the Baldwin Trust from Barrow Boat Yard to North Loughborough, enjoying beautiful riverside scenery, wildlife, packed lunches and homemade cake while learning about the Trust's work providing accessible boat trips.



Later in the month, members and friends spent a relaxing day at Ulverscroft Manor, organised by Rita Morley. The programme included coffee, games, a quiz, a two-course lunch, walks in the grounds and afternoon tea. At the monthly meeting, Jenni Broughton and Sarah Lemmon demonstrated the Village Hall's new hearing loop system before members enjoyed a lively beetle drive.

June's speaker was Philip Yorke, whose talk, **"Dog Eats Dog – Life as an Investigative Journalist,"** gave a fascinating insight into his career. Having worked for newspapers including *The Hinckley Times*, *The Sun*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Observer* and *The Daily Express*, Philip explained the determination, instinct and investigative skills needed to uncover a story.

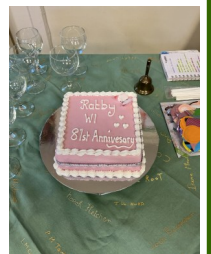
He shared examples of unusual recording equipment once used by journalists, discussed the importance of asking whether a story was in the public interest, and recounted several high-profile investigations involving politics, football and organised crime. Members also heard how sensational headlines sometimes captured public attention despite lacking any truth.



The talk offered a rare glimpse into the challenging and often unpredictable world of investigative journalism and was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Ratby WI

Ratby WI celebrated its 81st Anniversary at our meeting on the 10th of June. We had a lovely indoor garden party (you can never second guess the weather) and the evening was set out in the style of a 1940s street party. Our ladies had a great evening chatting and getting to know some new visitors we invited, so the groups could get to know each other. Our guest of Honour was Glenice Wignall the Chairman of Leicestershire and Rutland WI Federation. There was lots of food and cups of tea and we rounded the evening off with a celebration cake and some homemade wine. The Ratby WI meets every second Wednesday at 7pm at the village hall, just drop in everyone is welcome.



Around the Counties

Coleorton WI

On Wednesday 3 June, Coleorton WI welcomed 43 members and four visitors to the Beaumont Centre. Following the singing of *Jerusalem* and thanks to Lyn for the flowers, members dealt with the business of the meeting, including approving the minutes and hearing about a range of forthcoming WI activities and events. There was also positive feedback from the recent Amazon trip, with many members saying how much they had enjoyed the experience.



Guest speaker Paul Read then gave his entertaining talk, **"Reach for the Stars."** Drawing on his 35-year career as a principal dresser in London's West End, Paul shared fascinating behind-the-scenes stories, amusing anecdotes and insights into the realities of theatre life, revealing the hard work behind the on-stage glamour.

After his talk, Paul judged the competition for a sparkly item, which attracted many creative entries, before the raffle was drawn.

The evening concluded with refreshments provided by the rota team, giving members and visitors the opportunity to chat and enjoy another successful WI meeting.

At last we have received our certificate celebrating 65 years of Coleorton WI. We had a party to celebrate this milestone in the autumn. Pictured are Erica the outgoing president and Liz the current president.

Cossington WI

At our Members Meeting at Cossington we welcomed butcher Glenn Lewin. Glenn demonstrated to us how to string sausages. He then provided us with a bowls for us to have a go. We then split into groups and it was not as easy as he made it look. We had an hilarious time and we all learnt, some more successful than others. For our extra event our members visited the Abbey Tea Rooms before continuing and visiting Mount St Bernard, timing our visit to coincide as the bells rang out. Lovely to walk round the grounds



Whissendine WI

May's meeting began with Sally sharing the inspiring story of scientist Rosalind Franklin, whose pioneering work was key to understanding the structure of DNA but went largely unrecognised.



A planned craft evening had to be postponed, so Sarah and Sally quickly organised a game of bingo instead. With Graham as caller and all the proper equipment, members enjoyed a fun-filled evening, and the activity proved so popular it is sure to return.

In June, Caroline gave a moving talk about Anne Frank and her famous diary. The guest speaker, Jo Golby, then entertained members with **"Life as a Lady's Maid."** Dressed in period costume, Jo brought history to life with fascinating stories and gossip from the era. She even shared that *Downton Abbey* creator Julian Fellowes had consulted her for historical details used in the series. Her lively and engaging presentation was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Gopsall Villages WI

At our meeting in July, we had a most interesting and entertaining talk and magic demonstration from Bishop Peter Fox. Bishop Fox is a retired Anglican bishop and a highly accomplished magician who holds the rare distinction of being a member of the Inner Magic Circle. After serving as the Anglican Bishop for Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea from 2002 to 2006, he returned to the UK and served as a vicar at Old Lakenham Church in Norwich before retiring. Since August 2019 he has been an honorary assistant bishop in the Diocese of Leicester.



Bishop Fox is a lifelong exponent of stage magic which is the oldest form of entertainment in the world, and he calls magic 'a game of let's pretend'. Whilst taking a quick romp through the history of magic, Bishop Fox performed magic tricks such as a cup and ball trick which appears on the wall of an Egyptian tomb, and a rope trick performed by 'jugglers' from the Middle Ages. A thoroughly enjoyable evening and highly recommended.

North Kilworth WI

The North Kilworth WI held a craft evening for members in June that was enjoyed by new and existing members. We were introduced to the craft of Decoupage by one of our very talented members, Sandra.

A lovely evening creating a serving dish, along with enjoying delicious tea and cake.



Around the Counties

Burbage WI

Burbage WI has enjoyed a varied and entertaining programme of speakers this year. January's planned craft evening was disrupted by a snowstorm, leaving just one member able to attend. The committee made the most of the evening by enjoying a chat while creating a strawberry craft together.

In February, Jo Golby captivated members with her talk, *Ghosts in Grandeur*. March saw John Noble entertain everyone with *Funny Stories from the Post*, sharing humorous tales and fascinating insights into how postal services have changed over the years.

When the scheduled April speaker cancelled at short notice, Eddie Smallwood stepped in with his engaging talk, *Money for Old Rope*, ensuring another enjoyable meeting.

In May, Severn Trent Water gave an informative presentation on the treatment of wastewater, supported by interesting video clips that offered members a behind-the-scenes look at the process.

June's speaker, Paul Read, rounded off the first half of the year with an amusing and lively talk about his work as a stage dresser, sharing entertaining backstage stories and surprising facts about the speed of costume changes.



Glenfield Park



Our last meeting was rather different as instead of our usual format of inviting a speaker we decided to have a social evening. This took the form of a quiz compiled by Kate, one of our members. It was very enjoyable with lots of good natured

banter but it definitely taxed our brains. Well it did mine but perhaps I'm maligning everyone else. Perhaps you can reel off the six dwarfs whose names end in y. Most of managed 5 and probably you would too.

Mind you there was a lot of "its on the tip of my tongue" or "I know that but I just can't think of it at the moment" also lots of groans when we were given the answers.

We then followed this with a raffle.

Who would have thought that a raffle could generate so much laughter..I think the quirky and tacky gifts might have had something to do with it. A very successful and sociable evening which could well be repeated.

We were also out and about visiting Peterborough to see the exhibition depicting Britain at War. This comprised 80 tableaux of various aspects of life in Britain, all knitted plus some full sized models. Absolutely amazing. Such talented people.

Denman Report

On Thursday 11th June 2026, I attended a Physical First Aid Course, held in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, organised through WI House.

It was a pleasure to attend as I found the course incredibly informative and highly recommend it to anyone wanting to learn these vital life saving skills.

Our trainer, Robyn Chapman, was absolutely lovely and approachable. Learning a new skill can be daunting, but her excellent teaching style made everyone feel relaxed and comfortable. She encouraged us to work together in groups, making the session both highly educational and fun.

Although I had done First Aid training over 25 years ago, I found the updated techniques to be very effective and clearly understood the reasoning behind the changes.

I left the course feeling positive and reassured. Not only did this training teach me some practical skills, it also gave me the confidence to help should a real-life emergency happen.

Don't hesitate to enrol if you are given the opportunity.

Robyn kindly shared the following information, you might also find useful, to keep on hand.

The 99955 Hack: If you are vulnerable, unable to speak, or choking while alone, you can dial 99955. This transfers your call directly to the police, who can trace your location and send help.

Red Cross App: The British Red Cross offers a free mobile app packed with step-by-step guides for emergencies like heavy bleeding, heart attacks, seizures, and burns.

Kind regards

Hathern WI Member

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