

ACM Speakers—get to know them better, in their own words!



Welcome! I'm Annie Gray. I specialise in the history of food and dining from c.1600 to the present day.

I'm a historian, author, broadcaster & consultant.

Food is a brilliant way to get under the skin of past societies: everyone eats, and the choices we make reflect who we are and what we believe – and that's as true for the Georgians as it is for us today.

By exploring what was eaten, and by whom, how it was cooked and how it was consumed, we can explore a wide range of beliefs and behaviours, shedding light on everything from malnutrition among the poor, to the innermost workings of the country house.

Not only that, but I firmly believe that the recipes and techniques of the past are as exciting and relevant now as they have ever been.

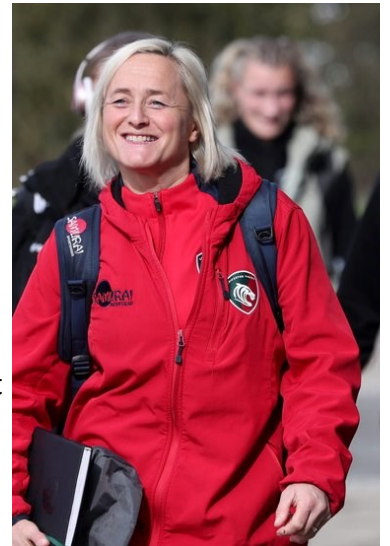
Put simply – the history is fascinating, and the food delicious. What's not to like?!

I'm Vicky Macqueen. I will look forward to telling you about my career as an English rugby trailblazer both on and off the pitch.

I recall having to sew badges onto my jersey, and how playing for Saracens and training with the Premiership side meant juggling a full-time job as a teacher.

Some girls just hadn't had the opportunity to try rugby to see how good they are. We also brought some players back to the sport, who had retired or just fallen out of love with the sport a little.

"They wanted to make history, and they are making history."



<p><b>Federation Chairman</b> Glenice Wignall glenicewignall@lrfwi.org</p>	<p><b>Federation Treasurer</b> Mary Hobbs maryhobbs@lrfwi.org</p>	<p><b>Federation Secretary</b> Sandra Woodward fedsec@lrfwi.org</p>	<p><b>Admin Assistant</b> Lois McKinder wihouse@lrfwi.org</p>	<p><b>Finance</b> finance@lrfwi.org</p>
--	---	---	---	---



**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

**WI House, 135 Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5LQ**

**Tel: 0116 2661342 Email: [wihouse@lrfwi.org](mailto:wihouse@lrfwi.org)**

**Opening hours: Mon-Thurs 9.30am—1.30pm**

[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 hope you are all keeping well and warm through the colder months and had a nice time over the Christmas period.

As inspiration to take with you into 2025 I wanted to remind myself of the WI Vision and introduce our own Federation aims to you all

### **The WI Vision**

To create a world where women come together to learn, share skills and work together to become active citizens, influencing change to improve lives in their local, national and global communities.

- We Connect Women
- We Support Women
- We Empower Women

### **Charitable Objects of the National Federation of WIs**

To advance the education of women and girls for the public benefit in all areas.

To promote sustainable development for the public benefit.

To advance health for the public benefit.

To advance citizenship for the public benefit by the promotion of civic responsibility and volunteering.

### **LRFWI Strategic Priorities**

To provide a valued service to our members, resulting in improved Member Experience.

Protect existing Women's Institutes (WI).

Grow our membership.

Whilst there continues to be challenges, we remain a strong Federation with 3309 members and 109 WIs. There have been some great gains in membership and we continue to promote WI across the county.

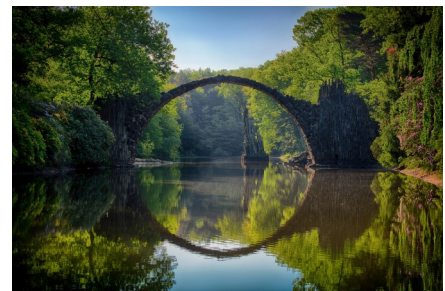
We can't do it without all the Members, Committees and Trustees. Creating a space for women in a community through WI continues to be an excellent way to connect, support and empower. I hope you can find that spark of inspiration from this. Thank you for all that you do. Glenice Wignall, Chairman

## From the House

Happy 2025!—I can't quite believe it... I am unsure where the year has gone, 2025 feels like we should be in a sci-fi movie.

As we look forward into 2025 at WI House we are looking forward to supporting WIs in many ways by

- Supporting new officers
- Accessing the history of the WI
- Working in partnership with other charities
- Gaining skills to take the charity into the future
- Training new Trustees and Committee members
- Thanking those retiring



There is definitely a theme of looking back and looking forward!

As always, do call or email with any help I can give. Sandra Woodward, Federation Secretary

## Membership Committee

The LRFWI Membership Committee is responsible for supporting WIs. Do get in touch if you need help.

Mandy Cutler, Membership Committee Chair.

### Subscriptions 2025 -26

The NFWI Board of Trustees has set the membership subscription for the 2025/26 membership year at **£51.00**.

This means there will be a £3 increase from the current membership year: £1.50 of this increase

will go to WIs, 75p to federations and 75p to NFWI

The distribution of the 2025-26 subscription will be:

Total subscription	WI share	Federation	NFWI
£51.00	£25.10	£12.05	£13.85



Payments will be due from members in **April 2025**.

### **Flexibility Policy**

WIs can apply the flexibility policy to their 2025/26 subscription. This means they can charge the full amount of the WI portion, reduce their portion, or waive the WI portion of the subscription entirely.

### **Dual Membership**

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. There is no pro-rata rate for dual membership, and the set fee will remain payable at any time during the year.

### **Make the most of your membership! WI Learning Hub**

Dear Members, just to remind you that as part of your membership, you can access many online courses at the **WI Learning Hub - most without charge**; click on this link:

<https://learninghub.thewi.org.uk/>

**Booking a course:** As a WI member you will be required to use the email address you gave for the MCS records when you became a member at your WI. Do not be put off if you see a charge against the course. When you get to checkout there will usually be no charge if you are a WI member - **for most of the courses**. There are Live Courses and Access Anytime Courses. These cover a wide range of topics including Creative Crafts, Talks and Interests, Exercise and Wellbeing ,Business and Training, Digital and Technology. Enjoy!

## Finance and House Management Committee

As we start the new year some WIs start their programme in January, some start them in April with the start of the subscription year. Your subscriptions are due 1st April and your accounts year end is Aug/Sept/Oct. When you have had your accounts examined please send a signed copy to WI House. If any Treasurers need help with any aspect of the finances please get in touch as we are here to help. Hopefully see you at the ACM—please do come and say hello.

## Public Affairs Committee



The Resolutions deadline is on February 10th—we hope your WI has had a meeting to vote. We want your individual vote and we do look forward to seeing what ideas you may have to work on a campaign on the winning resolution. Let's make 2025 a time to make our voices heard.

## Fundraising Committee

Lots to look forward to this year with a Race Night and our much loved Spring Lunch coming up soon.

We have been working in partnership with Leisure Committee to bring our best brains to offer every member something that might tickle their fancy in 2025—again be great for any member to come along or get involved in anyway. We always need helpers!

## Leisure Committee

We are a new Committee and, with a new Chair we're learning how to work together to bring some new ideas. We're working for you to make events interesting, affordable and accessible. We have lots of new ideas – any more ideas are always welcome! 2025 events so a couple of dates for your diary including

### **Celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day**

Save this date in your diary, Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

Come and join us in celebrating the end of W.W 2 in Europe, V.E Day.

Let's roll out the barrel and have a knees up! You can bet with the leisure committee in charge there will be guaranteed singing, dancing and much merriment.

You can even dress up in 1940s style if you wish.

More details to follow soon.



### **Cossington Open Gardens—Manor House.**

See the garden amazingly designed and used by Lord Kitchener's father! The garden of over 2 acres is resplendent with rhododendrons and spring flowering shrubs and bulbs in May. It features mature special trees from around the world and a host of surprises to delight the senses, including a homemade cream tea.

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025



## Arts and Crafts Committee

We had a very productive committee meeting in December where we planned outrevents for 2025. At the moment we are finalising venues and costs but we can give you some dates for your diary and make sure you look out for the flyers!

### **March 15th Crochet Drop In WI house**

April 5th Dabble Day

April 26th Beginners Embroidery WI House

June 28th and July 5th Stumpwork—both sessions needed to complete work

We also look forward to seeing you at the ACM, come and talk to us if you are able to offer a venue, help or have suggestions for future events.

Something you may be interested in if you haven't visited it already is "The Longest Yarn".



It is a Knitted and Crocheted, 80 metre 3D depiction of 6th June 1944 in wool art and will be on display at Peterborough Cathedral from 3rd March to the 1st April. You can find more information at [thelongestyarn.com](http://thelongestyarn.com)

## Women's Institute Speaker Circuit: A Reflection by Ray Lowry

I'm sitting in a village hall, the smell of disinfectant rising faintly from the polished floorboards, waiting to give a light-hearted talk to the Women's Institute. The chairs are stacked in haphazard towers against the walls; there's a trestle table in the corner with a checked cloth draped over it and, next to that, a tray of tea things. The WI, I've discovered, is a vibrant, occasionally riotous collective of women who – alongside baking, crafting and raising thousands for charity – like nothing better than to let their hair down and have a good laugh. I know this because I've been on their speaking circuit for years now, schlepping about the countryside to entertain them with anecdotes from my rather patchwork career: part-doctor, part-dentist, part-comedy writer. A jack of all trades, really, and master of none – except perhaps the art of getting lost on the way to obscure village halls.

It wasn't always like this. When I started doing these talks, I was overly polite, tiptoeing around anything that might seem risqué. I was, in short, the human equivalent of a cucumber sandwich – perfectly inoffensive and just as flavourless. But then one day, at a WI in some hamlet whose name I've since forgotten, the chairwoman took me to one side. "We like to have a good laugh," she said, "a proper belly laugh. So don't hold back." She said it like a challenge, and who was I to refuse?

The next time I spoke, I was bolder. I threw in a few cheeky stories, and they howled. It was the kind of laughter that builds until it shakes the room, as if they'd all been saving it up. Afterwards, they thanked me as if I'd performed a public service, and in a way, I suppose I had. In small villages, the WI is often the social lifeblood of the community. The chance to come together, be entertained and have a good giggle – that's precious.

So now I'm a regular on the circuit. In the early days, I had to hustle for gigs, even auditioning at an event where prospective speakers were paraded before a panel of unsmiling women, their arms crossed as they judged us. It felt a bit like *The X Factor*, only with fewer sequins and no Simon Cowell. These days, I get booked through word of mouth, which is just as well because I'm no good at self-promotion. My talks are an amalgam of anecdotes about my medical and dental career, spliced with my earlier life as a comedy writer. The tone? Think "open surgery" meets Radio 4.

There's an old saying in comedy: "If the audience can see your feet, they'll trust you." It's true. That's why I refuse to stand behind a lectern. Nothing kills rapport like hiding behind a solid wooden structure, visible only from the nose up, like a head on a stick. The microphone crackled, the lights buzzed, and I could feel the laughter evaporating into the gloom. Never again.

With the WI, it's different. You feel the connection immediately – a warmth, an eagerness. These aren't women looking to be dazzled by someone more important than them. They want to feel like they know you, and if you can make them laugh as if you're all sharing a secret, so much the better.

Of course, it's not all plain sailing. There are tricky audiences, usually when I misjudge the room – too many stories about dentistry, not enough about writing sitcoms, or vice versa. But I'm better at reading the crowd now. I pace myself, punctuating my talk with slides and props, and I've learned to enjoy the silences as much as the laughs. It's a conversation, not a sprint.

These days, the hardest part isn't the performing, it's the travel. I've spent too many evenings squinting at blurry road signs, praying I'm not about to end up in a farmyard by mistake. But once I'm there, parked outside the village hall with its peeling paint and sagging noticeboard, I feel a strange kind of contentment. It's the same satisfaction I used to get from pulling off a tricky tooth extraction or delivering a well-timed punchline on a sitcom. It's the sense of having done something small but worthwhile.

When it's over, I pack up my props, say my goodbyes and drive home, replaying the evening in my mind. I sleep better now than I used to after gigs, though roadworks and motorway diversions have a habit of trying my patience. What I love, though, is knowing I've made people laugh. In a world that feels increasingly fraught, there's something deeply comforting about that – about finding joy in the familiar rhythms of a WI meeting, a cup of tea, a rendition of *Jerusalem*. It's not just entertainment, it's connection. And for that, I'm grateful.

## What's On?

Mon 3rd March	Race Night with fish n chips	Stoke Golding Club	£15
Sat 29 <sup>th</sup> March	ACM	Leicester Grammar School	£16
Wed 2nd April	Treasurer Training	WI House	£5
Tue 8th April	Treasure Hunt	Market Harborough	TBC
Thurs 24th April	Speakers Showcase	Scraptoft	£5
Wed 30th April	Resolutions Briefing	WI House	£5
Wed 7th May	Faith Visit	Leicester	£8
Sat 10th May	Spring Lunch	Devonshire Place	£32
Thu 15th May	Open Gardens	Cossington	£16 TBC
Sat 17th May	VE Day Celebration	TBC	TBC
Wed 18th June	Bletchley Park Visit	Bletchley	£45

## Any new recruits? Open Meeting Grant still available

Trying to recruit new members? Maybe an open meeting will help.

Should your WI members want to hold an Open Meeting, the Federation Board of Trustees would like to support you. A **grant of £50** will be available to all WIs to subsidise the costs of an open meeting – **with invitations to non-members.**

### All you have to do is:

Email or phone our Federation Secretary, Sandra Woodward, at [fedsec@lrfwi.org](mailto:fedsec@lrfwi.org) or 0116 2661342. Let Sandra know when your open evening will be.

(Your open evening can be an extra meeting or one of your 11 planned meetings.)

In return a photo of your open evening and a few lines describing it – to be included in County News – would be welcome.

**31 WIs have already applied for this grant – and some have held their event and attracted new members!**

**Deadlines: Apply for the £50 grant before the end of March 2025. Use the grant by end of December 2025.**



## Monthly Draw

**Congratulations to our Monthly Draw winners!**

**1st Prize £25— Marion Heywood, Humberstone Heights & Belgrave**

**2nd Prize £15— Linda Lawson, Thorpe Acre**

**3rd Prize £10— Jane Hopkinson, Botcheston**

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



## Race Night



Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025

7pm- 9.30pm

Stoke Golding Club, 42  
Hinckley Road, Stoke  
Golding, CV13 6DZ

£15

Fish and Chip Supper

## Treasurers Training

Weds 2nd April 2025



10-12.30

WI House

£5—paid by WI

## SPEAKERS' SHOWCASE

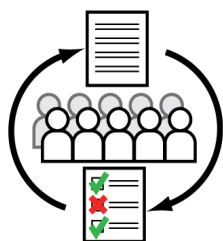


Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Goodwood Bowls Club

8A Crofters Drive, LE5  
2FH

## Resolution Briefing Meetings



Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April  
2025

2pm & 7pm

WI House

£5 per 2 members per WI

## Gurdwara Visit



Wednesday 7th May 2025

10.30am -12.30pm

£10 to include  
refreshments

## Bletchley Park



Wed 18th June

Coaches from

WI House & Burbage

£45 to include  
refreshments (lunch  
available to purchase)

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

## New Speakers—see more on page 12

**Maggie's everyone's home of cancer care.** Learn all about this amazing support service and have all your questions answered!

Alexa Wigfield 07825 313040 [Alexa.wigfield@maggies.org](mailto:Alexa.wigfield@maggies.org) Donation only

**BEMER: An Innovative Breakthrough in Circulation and Cellular Health.** It demonstrates how this innovative therapy aids recovery, enhances physical performance, and provides a non-invasive solution for pain relief.

Edina Palko 07365 800854 [www.healingwithedina.co.uk](http://www.healingwithedina.co.uk)

**Stress Management and the impact of sleep on our stress levels** - Explaining how Stress affects the brain, how we can manage it and how sleep is impacted due to stress levels. How to be more confident - Tools and techniques to be more confident including an explanation of how the brain works in relation to confidence How to train our brain to be more positively focused- How to train ourselves to be more positive and ultimately happier.

Rebeka Cohen 07969 088700 [rebeka.cohen@hotmail.com](mailto:rebeka.cohen@hotmail.com)

## Around the Counties

### Woodhouse Eaves

The WI Christmas party was a wonderful evening which began with an amazing buffet put together by all the members. December's meeting was brought to a high with the appearance of the Shanty-Folk, the Loughborough based folk band who are also part of the Loughborough Male Voice Choir. Guided by the group we all joined in with great gusto... apologies to those people in the houses closest to the Village Hall. Surprisingly, many of us knew at least the chorus of each song. The end of the year has seen a few changes to our committee. We said goodbye to our previous President and welcomed her successor. Some other committee members have left and others have taken on the roles which were vacated. It's a vibrant group, full of energy and enthusiasm, and determined to keep our WI in the village thriving.



### Ashby Castle

Members of Ashby Castle WI and residents of Bainbridge Court in Ashby with cards they had made at a craft morning



### Leire

We enjoyed various events in the run up to Christmas including the hosting of an informal Group reunion with 4 local WIs where we enjoyed a good catch up as well as a delicious spread of food, a quiz, which was won by Broughton Astley WI and a raffle. This also helped us to raise money for our funds. An enjoyable evening was had by all.

We held our annual bring and share Christmas meal which is always a popular event. Although there were fewer of us this year, it was an enjoyable festive event and we donated 21.6kg of food and toiletry items to foodbank.

We also entered a WI tree in our local Christmas Tree Festival at Leire Village Church with a theme of all things tea which included some very attractive china tea cups.



Two of our members Cynthia and Chris provided a demonstration of a Christmas floral and foliage arrangement which incorporated a blend of fresh and artificial foliage, wired cones and Christmas baubles finished off with candles. All three of the arrangements looked very attractive and provided inspiration for many of us to have the confidence to have a go.

### Ilston on the Hill

The final meeting of the year was a festive occasion filled with holiday spirit and creativity. On our arrival the table was set with an array of greenery, a candle and a florists tray. Each member eagerly set to work applying their floral skills to arrange the materials in a way that reflected their personal style.

As the evening progressed it was clear that the members' creativity knew no bounds. Some arrangements were lush and full while others were more minimalistic, yet elegant - all truly beautiful. The greenery combined with the natural textures of the cones and other accents gave each arrangement a rich festive feel.

The results were outstanding reflecting the individual talent and festive spirit of our group. The arrangements not only brightened up the room but also provided each member with a beautiful centrepiece to take home and share with their loved ones during the holidays.

This final meeting of the year was a wonderful way to celebrate Christmas and was a heartwarming way to close our year. As always, the refreshment ladies excelled and we enjoyed lovely goodies.





## Around the Counties

### Ratby

On the 11th of December we met for the annual Christmas Party. The entertainment was provided by The Quo, a lively ukulele band from Quorn, and party food was supplied by the ladies of the WI. Everyone had a thoroughly good time and went home both happy and well fed.



### Shearsby and Arnesby

We had a masterclass in making a table decoration or door decoration for Christmas with Heather.



### Barrow Upon Soar

After the 'Business Bit' of our AGM this year in November one of our members, Helen Sadler wrote a Pantomime for us – Cinderella, set in Barrovia. It was performed by some of our members and some of Helen's Murder Mystery Team of Actors. The audience enjoyed shouting 'Behind yous!', 'Oh No its Nots', Boogie the Tax Collectors – Bodgit & Scarpa & catching sweets. There was much laughter at the corny lines, The Ugly Sisters arriving on scooters & Our Presidents Husband who played the Baron Hard Up who wore Lederhosen!!



### Great Glen

What a festive and fun lead up to Christmas we've had. We started with a crafting evening making beautiful fabric Christmas trees. We had a Christmas lunch at Glen Gorse Golf club then a week later a Christmas party as part of our monthly meeting with quizzes and bingo adding to the fun. Some of our members went on a trip to the Christmas market at Burleigh House enjoying food and craft stalls and a wonderful Christmas atmosphere. We provided a cake and preserves stall at the Great Glen Christmas market. Delighted to say our cakes and preserves were very well received.



### Springbrook and Scraftoft

During the summer members of our WI visited the LOROS Hospice in Leicester. A very enjoyable time was had with tea and cake in the garden and a talk by Gemma the Volunteer Co-ordinator explaining all the different volunteer roles within the Hospice. There are currently 1300 volunteers who contribute considerably to the running of the Hospice. Volunteer roles include working in the LOROS shops, reception work greeting visitors at the Hospice, working in the various cafes, selling lottery tickets, community roles, helping at Events and many other areas. Debbie from Fundraising then took us all around the Hospice explaining how patients, both in the hospice and the wider community, are cared for by dedicated compassionate staff. Over 2500 patients each year benefit from the care at LOROS with the aim of helping patients live the fullest life they can. Patients can also receive care in their own homes. There are also counselling and therapy services available. The support is free but costs £8.5million a year to deliver.



The tour was organised by Nina Daws, Committee Member of our WI. If any other WI would like to take a tour of LOROS Nina can be contacted directly on 0780 126 8765 to arrange this for you.

### Anstey

We have been very busy lately. Our Open Evening took the form of an SOS fashion Show. It proved both successful and enjoyable. Members of the local running group modelled for us, and plainly enjoyed themselves immensely. A good number of visitors attended, all were given a promotional leaflet, so we hope that it will have gained us some new members. It certainly provided some good publicity, and the larger room in the refurbished and extended Jubilee Hall proved an excellent venue.



We also provided the refreshments for the Parish Council's fun Christmas event, as well as entering the Christmas tree competition. Despite the dreadful weather there was a reasonable turnout, and the soup sold well. Only a few ladies were available, so many thanks to them and a WI husband, for their hard work.

Our December meeting was our Christmas party. We were entertained by the After Eight Quartet, with songs and slightly corny jokes. We also learned that "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night" was originally set to the Tune "Cranbrook," now known as "On Ilkley Moor Bar T'at." We then had a magnificent bring and share supper, and finally were visited by Santa and his Elf, who handed out secret presents. It was a hugely enjoyable evening, exemplifying the friendship and fun that WI membership brings.



# Around the Counties

## Swannington

At their Christmas meeting our members brought along 'secret Santa' presents to donate to Bright Hope, also in Swannington. Bright Hope is a charity offering a day care service for up to twenty four people three days a week and offers a range of therapeutic treatments and social care services to individuals in NorthWest Leicestershire who have a life limiting condition or one that leads to a significant reduction in quality of life; as well as offering support to partners, family and carers.



When members took along the presents to Bright Hope they were given an interesting tour by Jan Shepherd, one of the Trustees, who also volunteers at Bright Hope, and saw for themselves the range of activities available to guests, including crafting,

complementary therapies, counselling and well being services, as well as a daily hot lunch - which smelt delicious!

Also at our Christmas meeting we were delighted to welcome our newest and youngest member Alice Wright, who also holds the record for being the third generation of her family to join our WI. Alice thoroughly enjoyed the evening and promises to be a great asset to our skittles team!

## Swinford

A piece of bubble wrap and an acetate from an old fashioned overhead projector were surprising items used by Tom Phillips when he came to talk to us about all things chocolate. This was an open meeting to promote the WI in the village and four visitors came along to enjoy samples and watch as Tom created a snowman scene and Christmas truffles to celebrate our centenary. We are hopeful that some of the visitors will become members in the future.

Excellent refreshments and lots of lively chat rounded off the meeting. The snowman was the star prize in the raffle and the winner was so delighted with her prize that she agreed to stand for the committee! A very successful evening in what has been a busy centenary year.



## Sileby

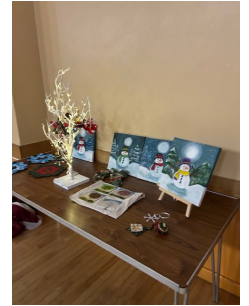


We welcomed Roxanne at our November meeting, who gave us a demonstration of Egyptian belly dancing. We learnt a few moves and routines and had a good laugh with it. There were quite a few aching bodies the next day.

## Glenfield Park

Wow. who would have believed it, Another year, another Annual Meeting. Where has the year gone? A review of the year made us realise what a busy year we've had. Excellent speakers and interesting visits. The committee, who have worked hard during the year to ensure we have lots of activities, have agreed to continue next year so the future looks promising. After the business was concluded we finished the evening with refreshments which were well received. Members also brought along their craft items they had made during the year and these were much admired.

We have had a busy month as apart from our meeting, we have attended the Carol Service organised by Glenfield WI and a few members had a fun evening painting with Louise. We managed to achieve a painting, some much better than others. I don't think any of us are likely to produce masterpieces but it was thoroughly enjoyable. The Dabble Day we organised was very popular. Kate helped members make 3 Christmas decorations ably assisted by Val and Pam. Everyone was very pleased with their efforts. The delicious lunch was an added bonus.



On the topic of food (and no we are not obsessed by it. We just like it ) most of us enjoyed a Christmas meal at the Queen Vic in Syston. Finally we did manage to visit the Secret Garden ( on a pleasant day) where we were really impressed with the Remembrance Day display. The

knitted poppies and and life sized figures were amazing. We look forward to the New Year which we hope will be as successful as the last.

## Great Bowden

Christmas was here again and at our Monthly Meeting Great Bowden we were in a festive spirit. The new President, Susan Woollard, conducted the business side of the meeting followed by Christmas Carols interspersed with Christmas Poems. The Carols were accompanied by Gordon Birch on the keyboard and very rousing they were too. The poems were quite varied, some more serious and some jolly and happy. Then there was a quiz for us all to test our brain power. The time then came for the mince pies and mulled wine or a non-alcoholic alternative. All provided, and served, by the Committee. It was a lovely evening and put us in good cheer for Christmas.



# Around the Counties

## Botcheston

Our November meeting had to be a last minute change due to the scheduled speaker unfortunately being unwell. At the last minute we managed to get an alternative – David Bell, who gave a very enjoyable reminisce of life in the villages of Leicestershire, with his personal recollections of life in Melton Mowbray, in the 40s and 50s and recollections from contributors – we could all relate to his memories (even our younger members!). Can you remember paying the milkman with milk tokens, the pop man coming round and many more. David brought with him a selection of his books about Leicestershire life – from ghosts to murders, many members buying as stocking fillers for Christmas.

The day after our November meeting we had a group outing to Gates's Garden Centre – it was a very chilly but sunny day - we all enjoyed looking round the garden centre with its extensive Christmas shop, coffee and lunch, and other shops that are also there. Well worth a visit!

December brought our meeting forward one week and 23 members all enjoyed a meal at The Greyhound in Botcheston (supporting our local), thank you to the team for wonderful food and service.



## Broughton Astley

Magician “The Great Adamos”, aka Adam Chappell, was the entertainer at our Christmas party evening, and what a great show he gave us. From disappearing one red ball then miraculously making three appear from nowhere, to rope and card tricks and cutting a skipping rope into pieces then making it whole again, he amazed us throughout the evening. His finale, a levitating table, really capped it all - it was a really magical evening!



Everyone enjoyed the buffet provided by the committee and we ended the evening with our competitions secretary presenting the trophy to Mary Dann, our competition winner for this year, then raffle prizes and the exchange of Secret Santa gifts.

Many of us had enjoyed a pre-Christmas lunch earlier in the month at Lutterworth Golf Club, and everyone agreed that this all added up to a very good start to the festive season.

Our entry into St Mary's Church Christmas Tree Festival this year “Let it Snow” was decorated with the snowmen that every member had made plus some extra snowflakes and snowballs made by our talented crafting group.



## Glenfield

Unfortunately, the speaker we had booked for this meeting was obliged to cancel his appearance for personal/family reasons, so it was decided to hold a Christmas Trivia Quiz instead. Members enthusiastically entered into the spirit of the occasion, working in small groups whilst Christmas music played in the background. There was much scratching of the heads as answers were sought to seasonal facts from previous times; such as which was the first Christmas Carol to be played from outer space? \*(see answer below) The winning table was presented with a box of chocolates to share and the afternoon was rounded off with a social half hour and seasonal refreshments



Jingle Bells 1965

## Hoby, Rotherby, Ragdale & Brooksby

Our Women's Institute was founded in 1924 & during 2024 we celebrated our centenary in style. In July members enjoyed a traditional afternoon tea accompanied by a jazz band & then in November guests joined us for our centenary AGM.



News 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

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

Articles may be edited.

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

# Advertisements

## Monica (Wing WI) Member

Contracted by the Rutland council to provide Home based care



- Do you need help with:
- Domestic cleaning
  - Personal Care
  - Medication and meals
  - Disability support
  - Hospital to home discharge
  - Live in carer
  - Respite care and holiday support
  - Help with pets



For a CQC registered, safe and trusted carer  
Call Monica 07716183474  
Office 01536605365

Percorra North Northamptonshire  
2 Tresham Street  
Kettering NN16 8RS

**Speakers here are not yet audited.**

**The new list of speakers will be available in the Yearbook at the ACM.**

**For any event bookings your WI will not be invoiced straightaway. We wait until the event has met the breakeven point and then invoice.**

## MARTIN TIBBLES

### PAINTING & DECORATING SERVICES



For all your home and Exterior re-decoration requirements by a qualified tradesman.

**0116 2910489 or 07855 412 945**



Creating big smiles  
*all round*

01858 540 317  
01572 898 147  
0116 298 4744  
homeinstead.co.uk/mh



Each Home Instead® franchise office is independently owned and operated.



**Accountant to author via Hamleys and a number 1 on iTunes** - A talk on my writing **journey from** being a Chartered Accountant to a writer of forty murder mystery game, three musicals, an opera and a trilogy of mystery/thrillers

John J. Delaney 07774 215087 Free talk + travel costs of 40p per mile

[john.delaney3@btinternet.com](mailto:john.delaney3@btinternet.com)

**Dog Eat Dog, the life of an investigative news journalist** (I was once one of these beasts); eight about the Civil War period (I recommend *Female Spies*, *14 Days: the story of the Siege of Leicester* and *the Battle of Naseby*, and *Femme Fatale: the life of Lady Lucy Hutchinson*), *Faithful and Fearless* – talks about historical figures like George Fox (founder of the Quakers) and Thomas Babington (slavery abolitionist and close associate of William Wilberforce). Most of the talks I offer have a strong connection to Leicestershire.

£50 per talk and £10 travelling expenses if the journey is greater than 40 miles.

To find out more please visit [philipyorke.org](http://philipyorke.org) Alternatively call **07879 658888** or send an email to [philipyorke@aol.com](mailto:philipyorke@aol.com)

Philip Yorke 07879658888 £50.00

**Fashion Show** - I offer fun filled and inclusive fashion shows, where your members become the stars of the catwalk. Great affordable fashion that spans the ages. Items also available to buy on the night. **Styling tips and tricks** - Perfect for smaller groups. We use WI members to display outfits and talk about styling and how to put your outfits together. Learn some tips and tricks to get you looking amazing **Packing the ultimate capsule suitcase** - Struggle with packing for that all important holiday or weekend away? Let's talk all things packing, as we pack the ultimate capsule suitcase

Jackie Allen East Midlands

07766661420 £70 plus a contribution towards travel.

[jackie.m.allen@gmail.com](mailto:jackie.m.allen@gmail.com)

Face to Face only

**Learn to Line Dance** - I am a qualified & fully insured line dance teacher offering an hour of line dance tuition (& fun) to social groups, parties etc. No previous experience required just the desire to enjoy a fun hour of gentle exercise ! Dances suitable for all ages and physical ability and not all country music...

Yvonne Anderson Market Harborough, All Leicestershire & Rutland

07738913026 £75 per hour plus + 40p per mile travel outside of Market Harborough

[anderson2603@sky.com](mailto:anderson2603@sky.com) Face to Face only

**Charnwood Clog Step Dancers** A talk on clogs - the history, social aspects, local links, and a demonstration of clog dancing. Workshop available

Tessa de Ville 40 Minute radius of Rothley, LE7

01509 852189 £85. We only ask for travel expenses if the booking is at a considerable distance.