

County Diary— Look at what we're planning for the year!

March

ACM, Leicester Grammar School, 10.30am-3.30pm with the High Sheriff and columnist Polly Toynbee.

Tickets still available!

April

Dabble Day, Hathern Band, Resolutions Briefing Petanque, Treasurer Training, Speakers Showcase

May

Spring Lunch
Leicester Treasure Hunt
Dry Felting
Temple Visit

June

Lino Cut
Birmingham NEC BBC Garden Show
Barracca Garden Visit
Garden & Tea Visit
Stumpwork, Federation Quiz,

July

Literary Buffet Lunch
Federation Quiz, Croquet

September

Pétanque
Race Night

October

Prick & Stitch
Blue Badge Walk
Autumn Lunch

November

Dabble Day
Christmas Day Trip

December

Xmas event with musical entertainment
Christmas Day Trip (all subject to change)



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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

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

Tel: 0116 2661342 Email: wihouse@lrfwi.org

Opening hours: Mon-Thurs 9.30am—1.30pm

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 very pleased to introduce you to new committee members

Arts & Crafts Committee—Jackie Clapham, Swinford

Finance & House Management—Josaine Cowley, Kegworth and Terri Eydman, Ashby Spa

Leisure—Sharon Stone, Earl Shilton Evening, Janet Harrison, Springbrook & Scraftoft, Clair Andrews, Barrow upon Soar

Board of Trustees—Terri Eydman, Ashby Spa

You are all very welcome!

We receive continued support from Trustees to the Board—we are all volunteers and as a group we come together to do the very best we can for you as WI members.

We hope you are managing through the winter weather and I know I am looking forward to the Spring and the warmth and the light it brings.

The Eastbourne holiday will be a lovely opportunity to get to spend some time with those who are going and see your faces once again. Despite the weather, it is so important to keep connections where we can. We have shared stories of the wonderful holidays of the past—it is always a memorable occasion.

Glenice Wignall, Chairman

From the House

It's been a really busy January! I have been working hard on the Yearbook, ACM Ticket responses, Resolutions, plans for the National Annual Meeting in London. I have been collecting your Annual Reports and lovely County News articles. Of course there is the exciting Direct Mailing to all members—getting the many 'thank you's' in your email responses is lovely!

The Yearbook will have some new speakers in it this year. I have used the information from your Annual Reports where you have had a good speaker and are not in the Yearbook. I have contacted them so we can all share their skills.

Stallholders for the ACM has also changed—we have some wonderful new stalls and some of the same favourites of course.

Thank you for your donations to the WI House Garden. I am looking forward to the bulbs coming up in the spring.

WI House has had its usual check and maintenance to keep it safe for visitors. You are always welcome to pop in, just call ahead before you set out and the kettle will be on. There are archives of County news, WI Life and Yearbooks to look at which really brings the amazing history of the WI to life.

Thank you for all of your support over the year, do let me know if I can help in anyway and I'll do my best. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sandra Woodward, Federation Secretary



Leisure Committee

Happy New year to all our members.

The leisure committee had a positive year in 2023 arranging days trips, walks and sporting events. Only one event having to be cancelled due to bad weather.

Starting off in 2024, the darts competition application forms have gone out as well as the Hathern Band flyer. Other events are in the process of being arranged so watch out for flyers and check on Facebook.

We would welcome any ideas you may have for future events, just send an email into WI House for the attention of the Leisure Committee and we will see what we can do. Alternatively check out our stand at the ACM in March.

Just one of the thank you notes we received from a WI following the Christmas Walk.

'I and two other Groby members joined the Christmas walk this afternoon. We were all made very welcome at Bishop Street Methodist Church with a hot drink and a mince pie, and then set out for the very interesting walk around several points in Leicester, hearing about Christmas facts and legends. Steve, as usual, was a very good guide, and threw in the odd cracker-worthy joke to make us chortle/groan. All in all a most enjoyable couple of hours were spent'.

Ailsa Jelley - Secretary, Groby WI



Membership Committee

Subscriptions

It's coming up to the time of year when subscriptions are due again, April. Please try and pay promptly to make life easier for your WI Treasurer. Each Member should pay their subscription or be removed from the MCS register for the WI. WI funds held cannot be used to subsidise subscription payment but the amount can be reduced to all Members under the flexibility initiative if your WI can afford to do this. Subscriptions for 2024 are £48.00 of which your WI keeps £23.60, the Federation share is £11.30 and National share £13.10. All WIs have the flexibility to reduce the WI portion they collect from their Members if the WI feel they have enough funds to support their expenditure of the group through the forthcoming year and leaving some funds in reserve for unexpected increase in hall hire or having more expensive speakers than planned.

Dual Members pay the same WI fee as your full Members and pay their Federation share and NFWI share to their main WI. If you need to clarify anything, ask any of the WI Advisers (contact details in the yearbook) or look online at the MY WI pages on the NFWI website. Whatever you pay I am sure you will find a year of fun and friendship within your WI.

Janet Kirk Membership Chair.

What's On?

3rd Thursday	Which Craft? at 10 –12	WI House	FREE
Sat 24th Feb	Open house for Competition Viewing	WI House	FREE
Sat 16th March	ACM, Leicester Grammar School	10.30am-3.30pm	£15
Sat 6 April	Dabble Day	Swinford Village Hall	£20
Sat 13 April	Hathern Band	Birstall Methodist Church	£10
Thurs 25th April	Treasurer Training	WI House	£3
Thurs 25th April	Speakers Showcase	Bowls Club Evington	£5
Tue 21 May	Temple Visit	Leicester	£8
Thurs 4/5 June	NFWI Annual Meeting,	London	£22
Mon 10 & 17 June	Barracca Garden Visit	Earl Shilton	£10
Wed 26th June	Garden & Tea Visit	Houghton	£11

We are hoping to run a Summer Speakers Showcase in Rutland if any WI would like to contact us to help arrange please?

Do call 0116 2661342 or email fedsec@lrfwi.org

NFWI Raffle Winner

We are all very pleased for Pat Welsh, Houghton on the Hill WI who won first prize in the NFWI raffle.

Pat says 'The win was a total surprise which, at first, I had difficulty in believing. I thought I was being scammed as I was being asked for my bank details! However, I followed up with the checks as I has been told to, and having checked that my ticket number was the same that I had been told from the initial phone call, I gave in and gave my bank details, and happily my winnings were transferred to my bank account.

The win had come at a very good time as we had recently had to replace our car and I also wanted to treat my husband to a short break for his 70th birthday. It was a lovely way to start the new year.

I'm glad that I supported the raffle as it supports many worthwhile causes. I shall be buying more tickets again this year, though I do not expect to win the First Prize two years in a row!'

Our congratulations to Pat and do have a go—you never know!



Monthly Draw

Congratulations to our Monthly Draw winners!

1st Prize £25— Shirley Sanderson Nailstone
2nd Prize £15— Kim Goodwin , Huncote
3rd Prize £10—Sandra Meakin, Waltham on the Wolds

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



Event Flyers

Annual Council Meeting

Saturday 16th March
10.30am – 3.30pm



Leicester Grammar School,
Great Glen

£15 each (£7.50 for stewards)

Dabble Day

Saturday 6th April
10-3pm



SWINFORD VILLAGE HALL,
LE17 6AZ

Cost: £20 to include all materials

Hathern Band

Saturday 13th April
7.15pm-9.30pm



Birstall Methodist Church, LE4 4JS

£10 per person

friends and family welcome

Treasurer Training

Thursday 25th April



10am – 12.30pm

WI House

£3 to include tea/coffee

Only 1 place per WI

Speakers Showcase

Thursday 25th April
7pm-9pm



Goodwood Bowls Club, Evington

£5

4 new speakers

Faith Visit

Tuesday 21st May
10– 12noon



Gipsy Lane, Leicester

£8 each to include
refreshments

Use the booking form on our website under Federation Downloads

www.leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk

if you want to book as an individual—email the form to wihouse@lrfwi.org or call 0116 2661342

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

Leicester Ladies



Great fun has been had at Leicester Ladies over the last couple of months. In November, after a very entertaining and interesting talk about the history of hula hooping, many of us had a go and succeeded spinning the hoop !

Our December meeting had a Christmas theme with a quiz, an alternative, nail biting version of Secret Santa

and blind tasting of supermarket mince pies with the Coop being voted the tastiest. Best wishes to all for 2024

Wigston Magna

Our end of year Christmas events started with a Christmas party with lots of food, games (including pass the parcel with forfeits), quizzes, and prizes. The paper plate drawing game provided plenty of laughs.



Next was the Christmas Tree Festival at the Wigston United Reformed Church. Our tree "Hats for Hope" won 1st prize. The hats which were knitted by WI members were then donated to the Salvation Army, who were very grateful. The Festival raised £250 for LOROS.



Ullesthorpe

Our speaker in November was Gillian Maddock who lives locally in Ullesthorpe and spends her time spinning and making items using wool from Herdwick sheep. She calls her talk from Ewe to Yarn and demonstrated using her spinning wheel. We were able to buy items and the Bobble hats were very popular. There were also delightful cards with sheep made from the wool.

During December we went on the Federation trip to see the Christmas Lights at Kew Gardens. This was amazing. Then we joined in the Christmas guided walk around Leicester to learn about the myths and legends associated with the season. It didn't stop there; members went to the Christmas Dabble Day and the Seasonal Serendipity Day.

A wonderful build up to Christmas.

To finish off the year members and friends put together their knitted squares to make a beautiful blanket to send to Ukraine.

Happy New Year.



Whissendine

December is our Christmas meeting so we started the evening with a glass of wine. We had all brought a plate of food to share and there was a lovely selection of savoury and sweet which we all tucked into. While we were eating there was a rendition of the Twelve Days of Christmas sung by twelve ladies, then came a couple of poems read out by different members including a rather saucy one by Pat!

We had a rather exciting visitor as well, it was Mother Christmas! She explained that her husband, Father Christmas, was a bit busy so she had come instead to hand out secret Santa presents. She asked us if we'd been good, some admitted they'd been a bit naughty during the year so they had to wait for their present!

When she had finished we played a game of Handbag Bingo where Nobody got all of them but some came close and the eventual winner was Margaret Hogan.

All in all it was a jolly evening and I came away with a secret Santa present and a warm fuzzy feeling of friendship, or maybe it was the wine!



Ashby Spa

We have had another busy month. The Garden Gang decorated the WI garden in Ashby with a beautiful poppy display and Shan Milward laid our WI wreath during the remembrance Sunday parade. Our members have donated Christmas goodies for our local food bank..

Craft club made peg angels and paper stars. Our strollers had a lovely walk in Newhall where they met some reindeer. A big thank you to Polly for organising a couple of wreath making workshops for our members. 17 of our members had a very enjoyable night out at Evita in Leicester as part of our theatre group.



Sweptstone, Newton and Snarestone

In November we held our AGM where Susan our president stepped down we would like to thank Susan for all of her hard work done this year. We ended the evening with cheese and wine. Our December meeting saw us getting into the Christmas mood with a wreath making session alongside tea coffee and cake at the 1620s house at Donington Le Heath whose staff made us all welcome.



Around the Counties

Hathern

Hathern Christmas Festival was last weekend and once again Hathern WI excelled in their craftiness. This year our theme was 'Jumper into Christmas', so yes you've guessed it, our theme was Christmas Jumpers. With near in 100 jumpers displayed on our tree using various different methods we think it looked great. Almost every member contributed too. Also on display this year was our 2023 Brenda Barnett competition entry based on a family gathering. We chose a Victorian Family Christmas theme and we came 2nd. We displayed it in a Perspex box (to keep it safe) and there was a lot of interest in it and how much attention to detail there was. We exhibited peg doll people, fimo clay Christmas dinner and glass creations (tree & wreath). Thank you to everyone of our members that made jumpers and also big thanks to Annette, Carol, Catherine, Chris, Elwira, Linda & Ruth for their skills in making the Victorian Christmas scene.



Whissendine

At our November 'open' meeting we welcomed twenty-four visitors which was great!



We also welcomed back Jed Jaggard, last time he was wearing WW2 uniform, this time he was dressed as a Roman Legionary. His outfit of authentic looking shorts and tunic (made by his mum!) were just the basics, he then added a belt, shoulder padding and metal jointed armour. As the talk progressed he modelled different elements to his outfit to explain how things altered as time and circumstances changed.



He talked about the Roman invasion of Britain, they arrived in Colchester on elephants, (on one road in Colchester today there are elephant sculptures), they completely levelled the town and rebuilt it as their capital.

We were so impressed with his knowledge and enthusiasm for history, I don't know how he remembers it all and he has promised to come and talk to us again about the Tudors and Antárctica (not at the same time!) Is there anything this thoroughly pleasant man doesn't know about?!



New Barkby

President, Shirley Franklin, welcomed members to the institute's December meeting.

After business matters, Shirley then cut a Christmas cake made by committee member Joy Goulden. There were also a selection of mince pies provided by the



other committee members. All very delicious amid a very pleasant social time, to end the year's activities.



Gilmorton

We have had a very busy December!

Our entry into the village Christmas tree festival entitled "A heavenly host!" earned us a commendable second place. This was followed by us hosting the Avon group Carol service with over 60 members attending.

Our December meeting saw us entertained by Sally Barker a finalist on The Voice U.K.



Finally several members attended a wreath making workshop. They were all delighted with their efforts.

Anstey

Right at the beginning of December, we were joined by members from Markfield and Astill Lodge WIs for their Christmas carol concert, a programme of readings, mostly poems, plenty of carols for everyone to sing, and an entertainment from Harvey, the organist from St Mary's, who kindly accompanied the carols. There followed a delicious spread of cakes with tea or coffee. The evening was enjoyed by everyone, with many remarking that it had made them feel really Christmassy.

At the monthly meeting, we were entertained by the Jerusalem Jammers. They demonstrated several forms of Morris Dancing, as well as enticing members to join in the Circassian Circle. The bring and share supper was ample, varied and delicious. Santa then distributed the secret gifts.



A competition for a festive table decoration was won by Liz Hegg, followed by Jill Taras and Sheila Price. Sheryl Bramley received the annual competition cup following her absence in November.

Around the Counties

Broughton Astley

27 members met at The Wentworth Arms in Elmesthorpe for a pre-Christmas lunch, which got us into the spirit of the season. We took part in the village Christmas Tree festival with a theme of "Clean rivers will lead to clean oceans" which was well received, but not the winner!



We had a very enjoyable festive evening with Andy Smith, musician, composer and multi-instrumentalist, at our Christmas party evening. Andy brought along three different guitars and a ukulele and entertained us with many songs that

we all knew. With his first guitar at age 11 within three years he and some friends had formed their own band and toured local festivals with his mum as their driver and roadie! Andy completed his programme with a medley of popular Christmas songs that we could sing-along. In the 1980s Andy started composing songs for his future wife, Helen, and has since recorded several CDs and written books of poems and reflections of their life together, all proceeds going to the wonderful Myton Hospice, which cared for Helen.

The Committee had provided a cheese and wine/mocktail buffet followed by mince pies and cake and we presented the Competitions trophy and gift voucher to Margaret, our winner for 2023. We had a Christmas Cracker Quiz, several raffles and exchanged Secret Santa gifts before completing our celebrations. It was a really fun evening, with lots of chat and laughter.



Glenfield

Our speaker this month was the very talented florist, Lucy Wiles. She brought with her an amazing selection of greenery harvested from her own garden to demonstrate how to create attractive floral displays with a minimum of expense.

She talked us through the various stages of creating an arrangement and over the next hour or so, made five beautiful displays using greenery, coloured baubles, candles, ribbon and other small seasonal decorations.

These she then very generously allowed to be raffled. It was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and Lucy definitely inspired us to search our own gardens for suitable greenery with which to make a table centre for Christmas Day.



Illston on the Hill

We met in December for the last time in 2023. A few members were absent due to party and visiting commitments. However, this did not deter us from our activities.

After the official business was completed, we welcomed Holly Norvell who opened a workshop for us to make Christmas tree decorations. All the materials were displayed on the table and decisions had to be made as to whether we followed the tree route, or robins, or foxes or any other designs. There was a general hubbub which was followed by a hushed silence throughout the room as everyone concentrated on the sketching, painting and sticking of our favourite subject. Naturally the silence did not last very long and we were soon back to normal! We had great fun making our exhibits and only hope you like what you see in the photograph.



Our meeting ended with the usual wonderful refreshments and all members wishing one another a happy Christmas. We look



forward to returning in January to a social evening. I guess this will result in even more chat!! That's what we love about WI – the camaraderie.... and the cakes!

Quorn

We were lucky enough to have the husband of one of our members entertain us for our festive Christmas meeting. Graham who was dressed for the part in a sparkly red top hat sang some well known songs that we were able to join in. Some old, maybe corny at times, one liners and jokes kept us laughing all the way through.

President Do and committee had organised a random Pass the Many Parcels game and Graham helped with the accompanying music. The committee had also made a Christmas tree decorated with individual hand made pyramids containing a chocolate for each of the members to take home. A very successful bumper raffle with several decorated felt hand made stockings filled to the brim with lots of exciting gifts were eagerly hoped for and given to the first few lucky winners. Several similar prizes were also made up which made this meetings raffle extra special.

Tea and mince pies were enjoyed before wishing all a very Happy Christmas and a successful New Year.



Around the Counties

Great Bowden

At the Christmas meeting members were treated to a festive evening, organised by the committee.

It started with Richard Moss who demonstrated the making of fresh green Christmas Wreaths. He also showed members the art of bow making, and gave many tips for anyone who wanted to make their own wreath. He produced two gorgeous wreaths which were later included as raffle prizes. This was followed by delicious mince pies, all home made by the committee, served with mulled wine and soft drinks.

When members had enjoyed the refreshments, it was the turn of Great Bowden WI choir, led by member Pam Abbott and accompanied by Gordon Birch. The choir sang three pieces with a festive feel, interspersed with requested Christmas Carols. Everyone was in good voice and went home feeling very Christmassy.



Quorn Evening

We were formed to give women, who are busy during the day, the opportunity to enjoy the many benefits of being part of the organisation. This group runs additionally to the well-established Quorn WI which has been running over 50 years. It was set up in 2018 by Lorna Williams, Val Blowfield and Barbara Rose and the group managed to keep in touch with its members through the difficult time of Covid. It is now enjoying being back to a full range of activities.

At the December meeting Lorna retired from her role of President to happily pass the role over to her daughter Sian Clark, hence literally passing over to the next generation. Lorna has been committed to the success of the group from the beginning being a hard-working secretary and president. It was the right thing to do we celebrated this with the usual Prosecco and the best mince pies, baked by member Wendy.

We were entertained by the renowned Well Seasoned Carollers, hearing a little of the history of carol singing, tunes old and new with beautiful harmonies.

This small band of singers donated their fee to Rainbows Hospice.



Ashby Castle

We enjoyed a Christmas Afternoon Tea for their December meeting. There was lots of fun, laughter and nattering, accompanied by entertainment provided by The Committee.



Shearsby and Arnesby

We had a Christmas Lunch at the Crown in Tur Langton. It was a delicious meal and a very enjoyable event. We held a workshop on 9th December where we made "Shovels" either as a table decoration or as a Front Door arrangement. It was the second year we have done this and it was an extremely fun way to spend a pre-Christmas Saturday morning.



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

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 2 Tresham Street
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Direct Mailing

All WI members received an electronic Christmas card which was very well received and we had lots of lovely wishes back to WI House. Now ..drum roll please.. we hope (fingers crossed) to have successfully sent the County News to all members who have given us their email address.

There are lots of reasons to do this, it reduces the need for paper copies to be printed for those who are good to receive it electronically and there is less pressure on the Secretary, who has a lot of other jobs to do, to send it onto you or share at meetings.

If you would like to be part of direct mailing and we don't have your email address please let your WI know your email address or contact us directly on 0116 2661342 or fedsec@lrfwi.org



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