

Annual Council Meeting 2027—A Day Not to be Missed!

Saturday 6th March 2027 | Leicester Grammar School

We are delighted to invite members to our **2027 Annual Council Meeting**, promising a fantastic day filled with inspiring speakers, exciting stalls, competitions and plenty of opportunities to get involved!

Meet Our Guest Speakers



Anna Iliffe – The Bridge

Anna will share an insight into the important work of The Bridge, a charity supporting women facing homelessness and housing difficulties within our communities.

Wil Cheung – Astronomical Photographer

Prepare to be amazed as Wil takes us on a fascinating journey through the night sky, sharing his passion for astrophotography and the breathtaking beauty of space.

Dr Turi King – Geneticist

Renowned for her involvement in the discovery and identification of King Richard III's remains, Turi will share her fascinating work combining science, history and DNA.



There's So Much More to Enjoy!

Alongside our wonderful speakers, members can enjoy browsing a variety of **stalls**, with plenty of opportunities to shop and discover something new. Don't forget to enter our **raffle**, featuring a fantastic selection of prizes, or join our **Monthly Draw** for the chance to win a cash prize every month!

We are also excited to reveal our **2028 Federation Holiday**, with booking forms available to take away on the day!

Our **Federation Committees** will have tables showcasing their work, upcoming events and opportunities to get involved. It's a great chance to meet committee members and discover something new.

Members can also admire the wonderful entries in our **writing, art and cookery competitions**, celebrating the creativity and talents across our Federation.

Have You Booked Your Place Yet?

Booking forms have already been sent to WI Secretaries, and **tickets are limited**, so book early to avoid disappointment! Ticket prices remain the same as last year.

We are also looking for **volunteer stewards**, with reduced-price tickets available for those helping on the day.

We look forward to welcoming you for what promises to be a fantastic and memorable ACM 2027!

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

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

Tel: 0116 2661342 Email: wihouse@lrfwi.org

Opening hours: Mon-Wed 9.30am—2.30pm

www.leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk or scan QR code

Find us on Facebook: Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of WIs



From the Board



The Board of Trustees would like to inform members that WI House will soon be having new fire doors installed to ensure the building meets current fire safety requirements.

This essential work is necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of our staff, committee members and everyone who visits WI House.

The cost of these improvements is **£19,500**. The Board fully appreciates that this is a significant expense and is very mindful that the majority of Federation funds come from our members. However, fire safety is a responsibility we must take seriously, and these improvements are necessary to ensure WI House remains a safe environment for everyone.

The Board remains committed to managing Federation funds responsibly while ensuring the safety and future of WI House.

Best wishes,

Federation Chairman,

Glenice Wignall

From the House



WI House is entering a busy period, with plenty happening behind the scenes as we continue to support our WIs, committees and upcoming Federation events.

One of the many tasks underway is preparing the 2027 Yearbook. Annual Report forms have now been sent to all WIs, and we kindly ask that these are completed and returned promptly, as the information provided is used to update the Yearbook and ensure details are accurate.

We would like to thank everyone for their continued support, cooperation and patience as we work through this busy period. There is certainly never a dull moment at WI House!

Finance & House Management

Our Independent Financial Examiners (IFEs) are working hard to complete the examination of WI accounts. This year, we have received requests from **49 WIs**, with just **four IFEs** available to carry out this work. We kindly ask for your patience and understanding while they work through these requests.

If your accounts have not been examined in time for your Annual Meeting, please don't worry. You can still present your accounts as a draft, pending examination.

We would also like to remind WIs that they are welcome to source their own Independent Financial Examiner. This must be someone who is not a member of your WI committee or related to anyone serving on the committee and who has suitable financial experience. This could be a bookkeeper, bank manager or someone with a similar financial background.

We would like to thank our IFEs for their continued hard work and dedication, and all WIs for their patience and cooperation during this busy period.

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.

Autumn Annual Meetings 2026

Annual Meeting

With autumn Annual Meetings on the horizon, just a reminder that there is a comprehensive guide to running your Annual Meeting on My WI.

This can be found under Running your WI, Guide to Running Meetings. Please click on the following link:

<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/guide-to-running-meetings/wi-annual-meetings>

The Annual Meeting is a chance to review the previous year's programme of activities and plan for the future. Our constitution requires all WIs to have their accounts independently examined annually in readiness for presentation to and adoption by members at the Annual Meeting. Staff at WI House allocate Independent Financial Advisers to WIs.

The WI Committee

There must be a minimum of three committee members per WI.

The WI Constitution states that:

The WI may combine the offices of Treasurer and Secretary or the offices of Treasurer and Vice President if the Federation Board of Trustees consents. No other offices may be combined.

If you are experiencing difficulty recruiting officers, remember that it is possible to share roles.

President: There are advantages to having two people share this role. Leading monthly members' meetings can be divided up to suit personal schedules. Likewise, committee meetings. Or simply allocating tasks to play to individuals' strengths.

Secretary: There may be a minutes secretary and another member who deals with emails/communications.

There is a form, issued by the NFWI - available on the LRFWI website under Running a WI - for recording the minutes of members' monthly meetings. Get members to help complete this – a rota?

Can another member take on the administration of County Events when members don't want to deal directly with WI House?

Treasurer: Can an assistant treasurer help by collecting monies (for WI trips/events). Collection of the annual subscriptions?

I hope this is useful, but please get in touch with your WI Adviser if you need further help.

Membership Committee—Are you a new WI Officer?

The LRFWI Membership Committee will be offering training for officers at WI House in spring 2027 for WI Officers new to the role, or those who want a refresher.

Free online optional training is available on VIA.

Just click on the following link which will take you to the website: <https://via.thewi.org.uk/>

Scroll down the home page until you see **Explore by category** and then click on **Federation & WI**.

Here you will see **NFWI WI Officer Induction training** and once you have clicked into this you can book the relevant module. The modules are self paced. Each module takes about 30 minutes to complete.

It is suggested that you complete the **three WI Core Training Modules** to gain a key overview of the NFWI before progressing to the WI Officer specific modules.

There are **separate modules for Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers**. Each module provides all the essential information needed to confidently take on the selected role.

At the foot of these separate modules is a **collection of useful links**, including websites, forms, and additional resources to support you in your role.

Thank you for stepping into this leadership role within your WI.

Would You Like to Join Our Membership Committee?

We are looking for enthusiastic WI members to join our **Membership Committee** and help support WIs across Leicestershire & Rutland!

The Membership Committee plays an important role in supporting existing WIs, welcoming new ones and helping our Federation continue to grow and thrive.

What does the committee do?

- Supports WIs with their day-to-day running and helps coordinate groups.
- Visits WIs to offer guidance and advice.
- Helps form new WIs and supports those going through changes, including amalgamations or suspensions.
- Provides training and guidance for WI officers.
- Keeps WIs informed about the work of the National and County Federations.
- Offers advice on constitutional matters.

Whether you have years of WI experience or are simply keen to get more involved, we would love to hear from you!

Interested in joining or finding out more?

Please contact fedsec@lrfwi.org.

Monthly Draw

Congratulations to our September Monthly Draw winners!

September 2026

1st Prize - £25— Jane Bryson—Quorn WI

2nd Prize—£15— Ros King—Wing 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!

Leisure Committee

The Leisure Committee has one final event remaining for 2026 – the popular **Stratford Christmas Market trip!** There are still a limited number of spaces available, so be sure to book soon to avoid missing out.

Looking ahead to 2027, the committee has already announced its first event – a **Wellness Day**, featuring Tai Chi, Life Coaching and a relaxing sound bath.

There are plenty more exciting events in the planning stages for 2027, with details to be released over the coming months. Keep an eye out for flyers and announcements to see what the committee has in store!

Art & Crafts Committee

Get Creative – Join Our Arts & Crafts Committee!

Do you have a passion for arts, crafts and all things creative? We are looking for enthusiastic WI members to join our **Arts & Crafts Committee!**

Our committee is responsible for organising our ever-popular **Dabble Days**, along with a variety of exciting workshops and creative activities throughout the year.

Why join the committee?

- Help plan and organise creative workshops and events for WI members.
- Share your ideas and discover new crafts and techniques.
- Help bring our much-loved Dabble Days to life.
- Work alongside like-minded members who share your love of creativity.
- Play a part in encouraging members to try something new and develop their skills.

You don't need to be an expert crafter! Whether you're passionate about a particular craft or simply enjoy being creative and organising events, we would love to hear from you.

Interested in joining or finding out more?

Please contact fedsec@lrfwi.org.

Come and help us inspire creativity across Leicestershire & Rutland WIs!

Embroidery Workshop

Eight eager embroiderers attended the Embroidery Workshop on October 3rd at W I House, led by Eileen Williams, member of the Art and Crafts Committee and ably assisted by Carol Beasley. They learnt a few new stitches, remembered some that they had learnt at school and chose four shades of one colour to embroider the butterfly design.



Lampshade Workshop

8 fabulous members joined Clare for a Lampshade Making Workshop at WI House this September. Everyone made a 35cm drum lampshade with fabric of their choice.

Clare shared tips and tricks so that everyone ended up with a great shade to take home and display. As always, there were a few giggles involved! Love the “lamp stand” photo ladies. Well done!



Public Affairs Committee

The Public Affairs Committee has some exciting events coming up, including a **Christmas event in December 2026** and a **Faith Visit in April 2027**. These events are always popular and places tend to fill up quickly, so members are encouraged to book early to avoid disappointment!

Meanwhile, our Resolutions Officer has already begun the important work in preparation for the **2027 Resolutions**. We are extremely grateful for the time, hard work and commitment this member dedicates to such an important part of the WI, helping to ensure members' voices are heard.

Sue Lobbs Quiz Report

RADIO WE HAVE LOVED" QUIZ 2026

There were only 84 entries returned for this quiz, out of which 20 were all correct, and the first one of these drawn out at random came from Julie of Tilton on the Hill who has received her £25 prize - well done Julie! Sadly there is no longer a WI in Tilton but 5 or 6 of its erstwhile members are still loyal supporters of my quizzes and it's rather nice that one of them has won this time.

I must apologise once again for a couple of whoopsies on my part. Firstly, clue 9 where I invented a non-existent programme – sorry! No matter though because everyone was given a mark for this clue whatever their answer. Secondly, for clue 19, I honestly thought the programme was called "A" Life Scientific hence the letter count of (1,4,10). It is called, of course, "THE" Life Scientific and so a mark was given for either the definite or the indefinite article whichever you gave.

If you sent an SAE or gave an email address with your entry, your entry 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 ARCHERS; 2. I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T A CLUE; 3. THE NEWS QUIZ; 4. WOMAN'S HOUR; 5. TODAY; 6. GARDENERS' QUESTION TIME; 7. PM; 8. MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK; (9. *Disregarded clue*) 10. MORE OR LESS; 11. MONEY BOX; 12. ROUND THE HORNE; 13. LISTEN WITH MOTHER; 14. MEET THE HUGGETTS; 15. THE NAVY LARK; 16. FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT; 17. DICK BARTON; 18. SING SOMETHING SIMPLE; 19. A or THE LIFE SCIENTIFIC; 20. ROUND BRITAIN QUIZ; 21. IN OUR TIME; 22. YOU AND YOURS; 23. DESERT ISLAND DISKS; 24. ANY QUESTIONS; 25. CHILDREN'S HOUR; 26. BROADCASTING HOUSE; 27. FAMILY FAVOURITES; 28. MRS DALE'S DIARY; 29. FARMING TODAY; 30. LETTER FROM AMERICA; 31. PICK OF THE POPS; 32. FEEDBACK; 33. BREAKFAST SPECIAL; 34. SLICED BREAD; 35. ANY ANSWERS; 36. WORKERS' PLAYTIME; 37. JUNIOR CHOICE; 38. HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR; 39. HAVE AGO; 40. FRONT ROW; 41. LOOSE ENDS; 42. LAST WORD; 43. JUST A MINUTE; 44. CROSSING CONTINENTS; 45. EDUCATING ARCHIE; 46. THE GOON SHOW; 47. THE KITCHEN CABINET; 48. WAGGONERS' WALK; 49. START THE WEEK; 50. BOTTOM LINE.

Radio quiz made £178 for County Funds, so thank you loyal quizzers for your support. If you'd like to go on to my Subscribers' list, just send me an email via WI House, headed up: "Quiz Subscribers", and I'll tell you how it works.

Look out for my next quiz, available as soon as this one has closed (20th November)!

Take care one and all, and happy quizzing.

Sue Lobb

Events — What's On?

2026:

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

Tuesday 17th November—PAT Testing, WI House, 135 Loughborough Road Leicester, LE45LQ—£2.50 per item

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

Wednesday 2nd December—Christmas at Barkby, St Marys Church, Barkby, LE73QG—£10

2027:

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

26th February— Wellness day at Syston Community Centre LE7 1HN—£25

Saturday 6th March—Annual Council Meeting, Leicester Grammar School, Great Glen, Leicester, LE8 9FL—£18 members £9 stewards

Wednesday 14th April—Faith Visit, Kadampa Meditation Centre, Guildhall Lane, Leicester LE15FQ—£10

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.

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

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

Competitions

Margaret Johnson Trophy— Writing challenge, £1. Deadline 26th February 2027

Edith Buckley Trophy—Poetry competition, £1. Deadline 18th February 2027

Individual Adult Cookery, £1. Deadline 6th March 2027

Individual Adult Preserve, £1. Deadline 6th March 2027

Childrens Cookery (under 7s), 50p. Deadline 6th March 2027

Childrens Cookery (8-15 years), 50p. Deadline 6th March 2027

José Smart Award—Flower competition, £1. Deadline 19th February

Entry forms and details are available on our website alternatively, contact wihouse@lrfwi.org for a copy.

Around the Counties

Great Bowden WI

For our monthly meeting we invited Clare Tilley to talk to us about the history of herbs and their use for culinary and medicinal purposes. Clare has set up a website called growmad.co.uk to help vegetable growers of all types. In her talk she gave us a short history of herbs, what they can be used for and the different types. She brought with her a selection of potted herbs for sale which were very popular.



Our afternoon tea usually takes place in a member's garden but owing to the high temperatures we decided to relocate to the local church which was blissfully cooler. At the end of the tea one of the member's very talented granddaughter's gave us a mature and competent rendition of songs by Amy Whitehouse and Anika Noni Rose which were enjoyed by all.

Blackfordby WI

In September, Blackfordby WI organised a raffle at the annual Blackfordby Village Classic Car Show and Craft Fair. We decided to create a theme for our hampers: **'Carry On Baking'** and **'Ready Steady Cook'**. The hampers were filled with food and baking-related gifts generously donated by our wonderful WI members. The lucky winners were delighted with their prizes.

Although the weather initially threatened to dampen the day, the village spirit shone through. The rain eventually cleared, the sun came out and everyone was able to enjoy a lovely day.

We were also delighted to receive a surprise visit to our stand from the Mayor of Ashby, he did a fantastic job of supporting the event and all the organisers. He presented his Mayor's Award to the overall winner of the Scarecrow Competition, as well as judging the car show and other competitions held during the day.

Blackfordby WI would like to thank everyone who supported our raffle and helped make it such an enjoyable and successful day.



Markfield WI

At our August meeting, Jane Wright gave an interesting and moving talk about Mary's Meals, a charity founded by Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow in 2002 following a visit to Malawi.

Mary's Meals provides nutritious school meals to children in some of the world's poorest countries, reaching the remarkable milestone of feeding 3 million children every school day in 2025.

Meals are often provided as porridge, using locally sourced ingredients and prepared by local communities wherever possible. By providing children with a daily meal, the charity encourages school attendance and helps pupils concentrate on their education without the distraction of hunger. Amazingly, it costs just £19.50 to feed one child for an entire school year.

Jane's talk included short films showcasing the charity's work, allowing children to share in their own words the difference these meals make to their lives.

Founder Magnus describes Mary's Meals as a series of small acts of love which, when brought together, create something beautiful.



Little Bowden WI

Fabulous morning as Little Bowden's Craft and Natter group met for the first time after their summer break to start working on its first group project, taking part in St Dionysius Church Community Christmas Tree Festival. With a theme of Winter Wonderland, the group decided that WI colours would fit the brief perfectly as



they began to craft individual felt decorations full of sequins and sparkle. Lots of laughter and lively chatter as they all caught up with everyone's news whilst creating these little masterpieces. A fabulous start to such a fun project! So looking forward to seeing the end result and bringing it altogether for the festival.



Hinckley Hollycroft WI

Dalziel Ellis kept us spellbound with the amusing explanations of how she expresses her varied life experiences via her poetry. A very colourful lady whose visit to us at Hollycroft co-incided with a spectacular September evening sky, prompting her to tell us the gods were with her! Dalziel is a natural raconteur who judged her audience perfectly to keep us all laughing but also touched on more serious matters. She was almost the last to leave the building after extensively chatting to our members after tea. We thoroughly recommend her as a Speaker.



Around the Counties

Botcheston WI

Reports from Botcheston have been a little sparse recently due to newsletter deadlines falling before our meetings.

In April, our own Sue Lapworth stepped in at short notice, sharing fascinating insights into her time working at Glen Parva Young Offenders Centre.

May saw Dave Moylan entertain us with songs, jokes and magic, while June brought a nostalgic look at 100 Years of the BBC.

We have also introduced a monthly Walk and Talk group at Thornton Reservoir, followed by the all-important coffee and cake!

Our cake stall at Botcheston Fun Day on 20 June was a great success. Many thanks to everyone who baked or helped.

Finally, our usual annual outing was cancelled as we prepared to celebrate our special 20th anniversary in July!

Market Harborough WI

In August, we enjoyed a lovely evening at Welland Valley Vineyard, hosted by owner David Bates. He shared how growing vines on his allotment inspired him to purchase land in Marston Trussell and begin his winemaking journey.

We sampled delicious wines, learnt about the winemaking process and enjoyed a walk through the vines. Several members also volunteered for the September grape harvest.

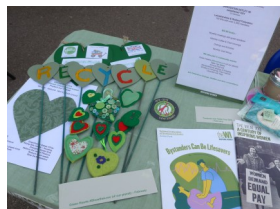
Returning on a sunny September morning, we were shown how to identify ripe grapes before getting to work with secateurs and buckets. We watched the harvested grapes being destalked and pressed, ready for the juice to be stored before bottling.

Our wonderful hosts provided refreshments, followed by a delicious lunch of homemade sandwiches and cake, accompanied by sparkling pink wine and rosé.

Each volunteer received a bottle of wine as a thank you. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding experience, which we hope to repeat next year!

Broughton Astley WI

Broughton Astley WI had a presence at the 50th Anniversary celebration of Thomas Estley High School on Saturday. Our table displayed how we interact with our community in village events, from our Green Hearts #Show the Love campaign in February to our participation in St Mary's Church Christmas Tree Festival every December and all things in between - February Table Top Sale and tombola, June plant stall at the Village Carnival and St Mary's Community Market, Remembrance Poppy displays in November and upcycled gift tags, which are distributed at locations in the village in early December.



Glenfield Park WI

Glenfield Park welcomed back Phillip Yorke to give us another interesting talk. This time the subject was "Women spies in the English Civil War". Who knew there were such women! We had an interactive questions and answers session on the war. We all knew the 3 main battles as I'm sure you all do. But I bet you didn't know there were 600+ skirmishes. Surprisingly there were 60 women spies who were successful because at that time women were invisible and seen as weaker vessels. Jane Whorwod was a Royalist who engineered escapes and managed to smuggle 682 kilos of gold in bars of soap to the Royalist capital of Oxford. Susan Hide, another Royalist, distributed letters but unfortunately was discovered. She died in prison and her death certificate was listed as died of fright. Elizabeth Allen was a Parliamentary spy.. She would go into pubs and overhear conversations about Royalist plans. Very successfully. A fascinating talk by an excellent speaker.

Last month was very disappointing as our boat trip had to be cancelled. It was actually the hottest day of the year. We did however manage a trip to Ulverscroft Grange where we of course enjoyed refreshments and admired the amazing model railway. It's huge with so much detail. Well worth a visit.



Little Bowden WI

Fabulous meeting last night after our summer break as we hosted an Open Evening to welcome new faces to our group before introducing our speaker, Louise Bourne, who gave us a brief introduction into Kinesiology - a holistic therapy that looks to identify energy/physical imbalances in the body. Louise spoke clearly and with humour about her own journey with Kinesiology, its history and how a practitioner works with a patient. She asked us each to consider four areas in our lives, capture all the positive things we are currently doing within these areas, before moving onto a short demonstration with two members. After answering numerous questions from members, the evening closed with everyone leaving with a smile on their face and 'nuggets' of information to reflect on — thank you Louise for such a fabulous talk.



Around the Counties

Avon Group

Approximately 45 Avon Group members gathered at Gilmorton Village Hall on 24th September for our Annual Meeting.

Following Jerusalem, we welcomed Susan Woollard from LRFWI, who shared the latest Federation news. The meeting was conducted by Gilmorton WI President Anne Fitzsimons and Group Secretary Jackie Clapham.

Our guest speakers, Saffron and Charli from Sutton Lodge Flowers and Floristry, gave a fascinating insight into their flower farm. Saffron explained how the business developed, their commitment to British-grown flowers and sustainability, and the challenges of the hot summer. Charli demonstrated a beautiful floral arrangement using flowers grown on the farm.

Following a vote of thanks from North Kilworth WI's President, members enjoyed a delicious Ploughman's supper and homemade cakes, provided by Gilmorton WI, alongside some fun quizzes.

New Barkby WI

August and September meeting

President Dawn Haynes welcomed John Parnell to our August meeting for an entertaining demonstration of balloon modelling.



John shared the fascinating history of balloons, from the Aztecs using animal skins to Michael Faraday's experiments with rubber. Throughout his talk, he transformed colourful balloons into animals and other creations. Members also enjoyed making their own balloon dogs, resulting in plenty of laughter!

In September, we welcomed Martin Ballard, an actor, former pantomime dame and BBC Radio Leicester presenter.

Martin explored the history of pantomime, dating back to the 1700s, explaining how traditional characters, music and slapstick comedy developed into the performances we know today.

Having performed in pantomime for 32 years and worked at the BBC for 37, Martin shared fascinating memories from his career, including an incredible 2,200 performances and 11,000 costume changes!

Both meetings provided wonderful entertainment and plenty of interesting stories.

Hinckley Canalside



August & September Meeting Highlights

Our August Open Meeting welcomed Lucy Lewis, the UK's first female bomb disposal expert. Lucy shared entertaining stories from her training at Sandhurst and military career, including service with the Royal Engineers and Royal Military Police, before retiring as a Major.

In 2018, she became Cambridge University's first female Marshal, leading its historic Constabulary. Members also had the opportunity to purchase her memoir, *Lighting The Fuse*.

In September, we welcomed Mitch Bridgewater, a contestant on Series 8 of *The Great British Sewing Bee* in 2022.

Mitch shared his experiences of the application process, interviews and filming, revealing behind-the-scenes secrets and the early starts involved. He also brought along some of his sewing projects for members to admire.



Although eliminated in the first round, Mitch thoroughly enjoyed the experience. His wonderful sense of humour made for a thoroughly entertaining talk enjoyed by everyone!

Great Bowden WI

How green is Harborough? According to Sustainable Harborough Community, not very! During their interesting talk, we learnt that Harborough ranks as the fourth least sustainable area in the country, largely due to its relative affluence and associated lifestyles.

Our monthly outing took us to Barnsdale Gardens near Oakham, originally created by Geoff Hamilton and famously featured on *Gardeners' World*.

The gardens have since expanded, featuring a wonderful variety of individual designs, including courtyard and Mediterranean gardens. Geoff used these spaces to experiment with plants and organic gardening principles.

Despite the challenging weather this year, the gardens were bursting with colour. We particularly admired the beautiful Asters (Michaelmas Daisies), which stole the show alongside vibrant Dahlias and late-blooming roses.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable visit, offering plenty of inspiration and an opportunity to appreciate the wonderful displays throughout the gardens.



Around the Counties

Glenfield WI



Glenfield WI enjoyed a crafty afternoon when Carolyn Boulter joined us to demonstrate how to make Christmas Tree Bell decorations. Having visited us twice before,

members knew they were in for an enjoyable afternoon with plenty of guidance and encouragement.

There was an atmosphere of quiet concentration as everyone worked to recreate Carolyn's beautiful fabric bell. With laughter, determination and occasional help from Carolyn or fellow members, everyone successfully completed their decoration!

October will see our Annual Meeting, so there will be no guest speaker. However, in November we look forward to welcoming Dave Moylan with his talk, 'Funny Turns', celebrating the entertainment and entertainers of years gone by.

Anstey WI

In July, Anstey WI held their Annual Garden Party in June Roe's garden. Despite the extremely hot weather resulting in fewer attendees than usual, those who joined us enjoyed a delicious tea and wonderful company.

August brought another opportunity to socialise with a fun beetle drive. However, the heat and a partial solar eclipse meant attendance was again lower than expected.

September was a different story, with a fantastic turnout to welcome Mel Charnock and Natalie Smith, founders of the Cosby Yarn Bomb. These inspirational ladies shared their enthusiasm, creativity and dedication to organising yarn bombing events while promoting positive mental health.

Members and visitors from two local craft groups enjoyed a thoroughly entertaining and informative afternoon, leaving everyone feeling inspired by their wonderful work.



Illston on the Hill WI

Anyone passing Illston Village Hall recently might have wondered what all the banging was about! Thankfully, no building work was taking place, just an unusual and entertaining WI craft evening!

Michelle joined us to demonstrate how to decorate tote bags using flowers, greenery, kitchen towel, wood and, surprisingly, a hammer!

After arranging our flowers on the bags, we covered them with kitchen towel and hammered away! The noise certainly stopped the usual chatter, although we soon made up for it afterwards!

Amazingly, the flowers transferred their beautiful colours and patterns onto the fabric, creating stunning, individual designs. Everyone was delighted with their creations.

The evening ended with delicious refreshments, plenty of conversation and admiration for each other's handiwork.

It was a wonderful evening filled with laughter, creativity and friendship, reminding us just how much the WI has to offer and what a special group Illston on the Hill WI is!



Gopsall Villages WI

At our meeting in September, members developed their crafting skills making paper flowers at a workshop organised by member Gill Lawrence. Using the simple materials - pre-cut paper squares, glue sticks, pipe cleaners and beads - and detailed written and verbal instructions provided by Gill, by the end of the workshop, some very beautiful flowers were created.

The meeting was also an opportunity for members to join in the National Federation of Women's Institutes celebration of WI Day on 16 September by dressing in purple to represent the Suffragette values of loyalty, creativity, and wisdom which are deeply rooted in the WI's history.



Wymondham WI

A small group of ladies from Wymondham WI met for a walk & talk around the village. The sun was shining as we gathered at the village pub. Led by our president Kay, we strolled around the back paths and across farmland with one or two members sharing stories and snippets of historical information. We ended the walk at the beautiful Wymondham Windmill where we met more members and enjoyed a welcome coffee or tea. It was a lovely few hours to spend together on WI DAY.



Around the Counties

Ketton WI

Growing Our WI by Opening Our Doors

Ketton WI has successfully increased membership from 24 to 37 over the past year, welcoming women of all ages, including younger members.



Our growth has come from becoming more visible and involved in village life. We refreshed our programme, introduced social events and improved promotion through social media, local publications, banners and a new logo.

A £50 WI grant funded open meetings, allowing potential members to experience the friendship and opportunities WI offers.

A generous Parish charitable trust grant enabled us to provide free CPR and emergency life support training for around 60 residents, alongside emergency information leaflets for every household.

We also supported village events, including the horticultural society's plant sale and school fair, while contributing cakes to the school raffle.

Our experience shows that embracing new ideas, working together and engaging with the wider community can strengthen membership and secure the WI's future.

Bitteswell WI

Following a very enjoyable garden party in the August sunshine, Bitteswell WI celebrated WI's 111th birthday in September with Dalziel Ellis, the Poet. Dalziel has appeared at many comedy festivals over the country and is often asked to write poetry at short notice on a variety of subjects. With a selection of thought-provoking poetry and limericks she kept us entertained and laughing. Interspersed with singing and accompanied by her grandpa's 100-year-old banjo she finished the talk with "You are my sunshine" with us all joining in.

Following refreshments a famous puppets quiz challenged our memory and a great deal of discussion followed. A very enjoyable afternoon.

Ullesthorpe WI

This summer's Speakers have either had to cancel or change dates. We managed to rearrange two speakers and enjoy a Beetle drive. The August meeting was cancelled because of the heat. However, in September we were delighted to welcome Tony Hiron, who stepped in at short notice. As well as being Town Mayor, and local councillor he is a trustee of the Museum. This fitted in well with our earlier Museum Trip.

He told us all about the History of Lutterworth, when it began, why it was called Lutterworth and its deep ties to religious history and aviation. We heard about a local famous Napoleonic soldier called William Green, whose memoirs have been used in novels as a source for many historians.



We have enjoyed a walk around Gilmorton, several craft meetings and are looking forward to the Titanic exhibition in Leicester in October.

Ashby Spa WI

WI Day was on the right date for our September meeting. After inspiration from WI Life we dressed in purple, made purple decorations and one of our ladies even made the recipe from the magazine 'Lemon and Lavender Cupcakes' which were delicious. Our purple picture frame created fun posing for pictures with friends '1+1+1' to celebrate 111 years. We did then settle down and were in awe to hear a volunteer from REMAP explain how they make custom made equipment for people with disabilities. Brilliant work



Erica, Alice and Maureen made the most of the props!

Oakham WI

15 members of Oakham WI travelled by train to Birmingham to visit the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter. The museum was once home to Smith and Peppers, a jewellery manufacturing firm whose owners closed the doors in 1981, leaving everything untouched. Our fascinating guided tour took us through the offices and factory, where original tools, stamps and machinery remain.

We were amazed by the cramped working conditions, lack of heating and poor ventilation. Workers were regularly exposed to toxic substances, including mercury, acids and dust. Our guide also demonstrated the machinery, revealing the constant noise workers endured.

Following the tour, we explored the historic Jewellery Quarter, which remarkably still produces around 40% of UK jewellery. Along the heritage trail, we discovered workshops and pavement markers explaining the area's history.

After a lovely sociable lunch, we headed home having enjoyed a fascinating and memorable day together.



Around the Counties

Cossington WI

11 Cossington members did their second Loughborough walk with Steve our excellent guide again. Finishing the walk in the Memorial Park where Steve told us the history of the park and bandstand where concerts still take part during the summer on Sundays. The history of the Carillon Tower was fascinating and the tower is open on certain dates. The morning finished with lunch at Olivia's in the park. Our August Members Meeting was our Annual Garden Party meeting. It was a fuddle meeting and Members brought a lovely selection of food. A treasure hunt around Cossington before the meeting was arranged but some members had to drop out due to the heat. It was also the evening of the eclipse, and showed how much fun can be had with a card and white paper plus other items.



Thurnby Bushby WI

Our September meeting was held on the 111th anniversary of the WI. In recognition of this, members came wearing something purple. Glenis joined us as a special guest. Our whole evening had a purple theme commencing with the reading of the poem "Warning" by Jenny Joseph. This was followed by a Quiz Night with questions ranging from purple flowers to Teletubbies and a "Feely bag" round that had us all puzzling to identify the 22 items hidden in sealed bags. All teams did remarkably well on that round. Refreshments included cupcakes decorated with purple flowers made by our president Judith. They tasted as good as they looked. We also held a Cake Sale in aid of Macmillan and along with proceeds of our raffle we raised £60 for this very worthy cause. All in all a fantastic evening.



Witherley WI

Nina warmly welcomed members to our September meeting.

Despite a quieter month, we enjoyed the Witherley Church Duck Race, although high river levels meant the winners had to be chosen from ducks in an enclosure! Our successful cake stall raised an amazing £391.50. Many thanks to everyone who baked and helped.

We are looking forward to our 60th Birthday Party on 17th October, alongside several other activities, including an autumn lunch, murder mystery evening and group meeting.

Our guest speaker, Diane Vernon, shared her fascinating journey from midwifery into glassmaking. She explained three techniques: copper foiling, leaded glass and fused glass, displaying beautiful examples of her work, which members could purchase.

Ann W thanked Diane for her enthusiastic and informative talk. The afternoon concluded with delicious sandwiches and cakes, kindly provided by Jenny S, Rosemary F and Elisabeth A.



Sheepy WI

Sheepy WI members enjoyed a lovely summer evening at our Picnic in the Park, filled with good food, laughter and wonderful company.

We welcomed Matthew from Sticky Fingers, a local mobile food company, who shared the fascinating story of how the business started from scratch and has grown over the years. Members enjoyed learning about their homemade ice cream and the carefully selected ingredients used to create their delicious and unusual flavours. Of course, the highlight was getting to sample a tempting selection for ourselves!

It was a wonderful evening, combining a summer picnic with an insight into a thriving local business. We look forward to welcoming Sticky Fingers back in the future. Our committee members also made the most of the sunshine, holding their July meeting outdoors before settling down to watch England play in the World Cup later that evening!



Hathern WI

Our September meeting was held on 21st September, just after WI Day. In memory of the suffragettes and to celebrate 111 years of the WI our members came wearing something purple.

Our speaker for the evening was Jenny from 'Rainbows Childrens Hospice' which is based in the East Midlands. They care for babies, children and young people with life-shortening and life-threatening conditions from birth up to the age of 18. Jenny showed us around the hospice with her slide show and the technology and adaptations for everything to make life that little bit easier was amazing.

Members always dropped off unwanted handbags for the 'Rainbows Handbag Amnesty' collection and many members bought refurbished bags that Rainbows had brought along to sell to raise money.



Around the Counties

Sheepy WI

Sheepy WI members enjoyed a fascinating and entertaining evening when we welcomed Ginnette Brooks from GB Dance to our September meeting.

Ginnette gave us a wonderful insight into her journey to becoming a ballet teacher, sharing her passion for dance and, most importantly, her love of teaching. She explained how her work has developed over the years, from teaching young toddlers to working with older people, and how rewarding she has found every stage of her teaching career.

We learnt about the many benefits of dance for older people, including keeping active, improving movement and balance, building confidence and, perhaps most importantly, having fun and enjoying being part of a group. We also had the opportunity to put some of Ginnette's advice into practice! Members had great fun trying out some ballet exercises, with plenty of smiles and laughter along the way.

It was an inspiring evening which reminded us that you're never too old to dance — and that keeping active can be both enjoyable and rewarding. A huge thank you to Ginnette for sharing her passion, enthusiasm and expertise



Wigston Magna WI

Our talk in July was "The Royal Yacht Britannia" by Bill Haley. Bill served in the Royal Navy and spent 7 years on the Royal Yacht which he said was a wonderful experience. It sailed for 43 years taking the Queen and Prince Phillip to as many countries as possible. It was also to be a hospital ship in the event of a war. Promoting the UK abroad was also in its remit.

In August we had an enjoyable lunch out at our local garden centre and in September we had a lovely evening out at an Italian restaurant.

Our speaker in September was Sue Meeks who gave us her experience working for The Red Cross.



Coleorton WI

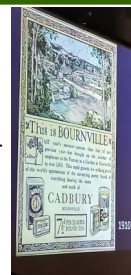
Our September meeting took place at the Beaumont Centre in Peggs Green, where we welcomed 48 members and three visitors.

Following Jerusalem and thanks to Liz for the flowers, we discussed forthcoming events, including a return visit to the Amazon facility at Castle Donington and two Christmas trips to Haddon Hall.

Plans were also made for our new craft group, with its first meeting scheduled for 16th September. We hope this will become a regular part of our WI activities.

Our guest speaker, Bob Booth, gave a fascinating illustrated talk about his lifelong home of Bournville. He shared the history of the Cadbury family, their care for employees and what life in Bournville is like today.

Bob also judged our competition for a photograph of a village sign, before members enjoyed tea and delicious cakes kindly provided by the rota ladies.



Broughton Astley WI

In September Alistair Crooks from MAF UK (Mission Aviation Fellowship), the world's largest humanitarian airline gave us his 'Flying For Life' presentation. Despite them working along side some very well known charity partners providing Help, Hope and Healing to some of the most isolated places in the world and celebrating their 80th Anniversary last year, the majority of us had never heard of this amazing organisation which is a travesty.

After the summer break, Coffee & Chat meets resumed with a visit to a new venue The Elephant & Castle pub in Thurlaston.

At the first match of the skittles tournament the team played Fleckney, the next match in October will see them face Ullesthorpe.



County News deadline

COUNTY NEWS ISSUES 2025/26	DEADLINE FOR ITEMS TO BE SUBMITTED
DECEMBER 2026/JANUARY 2027 EDITION	1 st November 2026
February 2027 EDITION	1st January 2027

Please submit your items by the 1st of the preceding month to be included in the most recent edition of County news. Any submissions after the 1st will go into the following County News

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Large	£32	£95	£189	£340

Please pay on receipt of invoice only.

Please send material for County News to **WI House** by email: fedsec@lrfwi.org or post to arrive by the **FIRST** of the preceding month at the latest. **Any WI announcements can be made in County News.**

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