

Afternoon Tea with Baroness Bolsover




What a wonderful event enjoyed by all!
How interesting it was to see how everything was done in elite Victorian circles. The Baroness did not disappoint.





Afternoon tea was served (with all of the correct etiquette observed!) All had an excellent, jolly time!



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Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of Women's Institutes
 incorporated in England and Wales as a Company limited by Guarantee No. 02769771 Charity Reg No. 1016 766
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 Find us on Facebook: Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of WIs



Over 50 members attended and everyone looked splendid in their finest. Our Chairman, Glenice Wignall and Chairman of Fundraising, Rita Caves even got to have a photograph with the Baroness!



Booking events

We continue to improve our event booking process to allow for

- more flexibility to continue to book through your WI secretary or book individually
- payment by BACS or cheque
- better information ahead of the event
- reduced reliance on paper, printing and postage
- better and quicker confirmation of your booking
- better health and safety—with contact details for everyone in case of emergency or if the event changes

A new booking form is available on our website in 'federation downloads' and the process for booking events will be available there too.

No tickets will be issued unless there is a large event. A list will be held at the event to confirm bookings.

If you are booking on behalf of a group please do forward any email confirmation to them.

We are still finding our way with this process and we are keen to hear your thoughts. Do please contact fedsec@lrfwi.org or 0116 2661342

Which Craft?

Which Craft? had their meeting at WI house on the 3rd Thursday in April. Ladies arrived with their different projects.

One lady making buttonholes for Coronation celebrations, others completing embroidery projects. Lorraine shared some of her folded books displaying a variety of embroidery techniques and ideas. Really inspirational.

Everyone had a good chat sharing ideas.

Meetings will be on the 3rd Thursday of the month at WI House 10am—12 noon. The next one is 18th May and then 15th June. If you enjoy crafting and would like a morning crafting and sharing ideas and advice come and join us.



Green theme—Did you know?

Making a difference starts with all of us!

An objective of the WI is to **'conserve and protect the environment and the prudent use of natural resources'** so we need to practise what we preach at WI House!

This has been made easier with a donation of eco-friendly refillable cleaning products to WI House.

Only 12% of your plastic recycling gets recycled in Leicestershire. One study found that only 9% of all plastic produced has ever been recycled. That means a MASSIVE 91%, of all the plastic, ever made is now in landfill, has been incinerated, or made its way into the natural environment.

More information will follow on how we aim to make changes as a

Federation and how you can get involved!



New Garden Bench

I was pleased to be able to donate towards one of the new garden benches at WI House in memory of my dear late friend, Janet Timson. Janet worked in the WI house general office for many years, being one of the main organisers for the years we catered at the Royal Show.

Using her craft talent she produced cross stitch and quilting kits to raise funds for the WI House.

Janet was a member of Countesthorpe WI and also a group convener for the Cromwell group and WI president when we won several county competitions.

It was pleasing that funds from Newton Harcourt WI also contributed to the bench as I was a member there for many years and Jan attended many events with me.

Happy memories,

Diana Lee

Countesthorpe WI



What's Coming Up?

3rd Thursday	Which Craft? at WI House 10–12
Sat 20 th May	Spring Lunch
Thur 1st June	Treasurer Training
Tue 4 th July	Croquet Taster
Fri 7th July	Quiz Night—4 venues!
Sat 9 th Sept	Beading workshop
Sat 23 rd Sept	Big Green Week—bulb planting
Sat 7 th Oct	Developing Embroidery
Sat 14th Oct	Autumn Lunch
Tue 7th Nov	Billa Barra Anniversary Walk
Sat 25 th Nov	Xmas Dabble Day
	2024 ACM art competition 'Celebration'

Board of Trustees—Linda Martin, Thurnby & Bushby WI



Being Federation Treasurer doesn't leave me with a lot of spare time, but one of my favourite leisure activities is walking. Earlier this year I spotted an invitation from NFWI to join in a sponsored walk for Ovarian Cancer charities, and I decided to sign up. The challenge was to walk 100 kilometres during the month of March. I went out for a walk almost every day, in all weathers, and completed 120k. Thanks to sponsorship from friends and family, including members of my WI and the Board of Trustees, I raised over £250. So I had fun, got some exercise and supported a WI campaign all at the same time!

Even if you don't want to walk as far as I did, there are lots of opportunities to walk with WI friends, organised at local and Federation level. Why not give it a go?

Coronation Special



Our July edition will be brimming with your Coronation celebrations



Here are a few photographs of your creations from around the county from Kibworth & Smeeton and Swannington for your delight!

Notices

The website will be updated with a slightly new look next month—the Federation Downloads section is so useful for booking forms, annual report and subscription information

Please refresh your memory at lrfwi.org

Treasurers—gentle request—if you haven't sent your subs in yet please send in what you've got

Congratulations to our Monthly Draw winners for April!

**1st Prize £25— Jane Hopkinson, Botcheston
2nd Prize £15— Christine Beaumont, Botcheston
3rd Prize £10—Jane Harris, Coleorton**

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



Around the Counties

Loddington

Our latest WI meeting at Loddington was not typical. The hall was cheerfully decorated with flags and bunting, balloons and flowers, all ready for some patriotic fun and games.

Following our usual welcome by our president we were quickly organised into four teams, each named after the royal residences Windsor, Kensington, St James and Sandringham.

Each team received a large bag of goodies and were tasked to make a crown, fit for a king, using the contents. Also included in the bag were quiz sheets. So whilst the crown was being created we were tested on our knowledge of Royal historical facts and dates. There were anagrams to solve and music questions all leading to answers associated with royalty.

The atmosphere in the hall was that 'this was just good frivolous fun'. However there was an undercurrent of competitiveness between the teams. This caused lots of whispered conversations, hastily adjusted answers and busy hands trying hard to be the winners of the best crown. In fact they were all winners. Four very different and equally imaginative crowns were created.



Broughton Astley

Our April guest speaker sadly had to cancel at short notice, so our member Allison, who had been a primary school teacher and then Ofsted Inspector, bravely stepped up to tell us some anecdotes of things that had happened during her career. She said one of the things she loved most was watching the children and the funny things, particularly her very young pupils, had said. Like the four year old who, when asked to draw a picture of his family, said his picture was "still in his pencil". And whilst learning about toads and frogs she was asked how to spell T-O-A-D, and the little girl wrote "I toad my mum" On one occasion the children had been instructed to be on their best behaviour when the VIPs arrived and one guest was told by a pupil that "she looked beautiful, just like a clown" - praise indeed! One staff member was clearly having difficulty with some lockers, and when asked if everything was OK, he said that he would be when he managed to get the boy out!

Two of our members attended the Resolution Briefing meeting at WI House and found the information provided by a representative of the Trent Rivers Trust most helpful.

Houghton on the Hill meet Birstall & Wanlip



What a surprise I had when holidaying on the new P&O cruise ship Arvia I read in the daily Horizon they had arranged a WI get together.

I went along and although there was only eight of us we had a nice time chatting and putting the WI to right. I was delighted to meet one of our own federation ladies from Houghton on the Hill, Carole Beretta, she has been in the WI for 49 years and has lots of roles on her local WI committee.

Around the Counties

Jerusalem Jammers



After driving through atrocious weather to get to our gig at Peatling Parva we were chuffed to be rewarded with delicious homemade brownies and Simnel cake. We danced for our smallest ever audience (apart from the time a lone horse ran away when the music started!) and were thrilled when all the ladies joined in enthusiastically with our stick dance.

As ever, we are on the lookout for new musicians and dancers. Details from super secretary Sue 01455 458107 or page 74 of the Yearbook.



Hinckley Hollycroft

Jo Golby kept us enthralled with her account of life as a historical costumed guide in various venues. Whilst working at Warwick Castle she was 'body-hunted' for the waxwork model of Darling Daisy, the Countess of Warwick, at least from the neck down. She was allowed to keep the hat with veil (pictured) which she used to great effect frightening the visitors on Hallowe'en nights in Calke Abbey. During her career she has met many famous people, not least Eric the Vulture but you'll need to book her to find out about him!



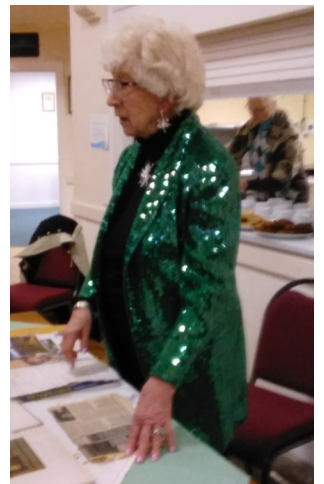
Ilston on the Hill

We welcomed Margaret Hudson to entertain us at our April meeting. Margaret was formerly a Tiller Girl. If you don't know about Tiller Girls ask your Mum or Granny! Margaret is in her 90's and she arrived as if she were a 50 year old. She looked a million dollars dressed in a fabulous sequinned emerald green jacket and she moved so beautifully.

She left school at 14 and confirmed that everything she has learned in life was after leaving school. She went into dancing and obviously proved to be extremely talented. Margaret joined the "Tillers" and never looked back. Minimum height to be a "Tiller" was 5'5", Margaret was taller than this so she was always put at the end of the line, when it came to doing the wheel, she was tearing around on the outside whilst the dancer in the middle was just marking time. Once they were doing a show where they were in the "clouds" and had to make their way down a walkway

(tricky). As she was making a turn back into the centre she fell off the board and had to stay there until the end of the scene. Fortunately she was unhurt and in her usual way just laughed it off, since then she was dubbed "the fallen angel". She has met so many famous people, too many to mention. One of her highlights was performing at the Royal Command Performance in front of the King! She has now seen 2 kings and a queen!

Margaret has graced the boards at all the number one theatres in the British Isles and had some wonderful experiences. What an inspirational woman.



Around the Counties

Stoke Golding

Our April meeting was with John Langham who presented 'The history of recorded music'. John started his presentation by reminding us all that we are surrounded by music; in film, television, advertising, in our homes and in our cars. Performance music began with orchestras, accessible to the wealthier, then moved on to music hall, accessible to most. One of our members twice great aunt was a music hall star!

In the mid to late 1800's people wanted music in their own homes and the piano became a common piece in many front rooms, played by adults and children alike, the whole family would gather around the piano.

Then we moved on to the phonograph (later the gramophone) which brought recorded music into homes across the world, for a price.

We whizzed through records (did you know the term 'album' actually comes from a collection of records in a book? Records had short playtime so many records made up one album!), HMV, in 1927 things became electric and we left wind up behind, music moved to television, into cars, juke boxes, portable cassette tapes and CDs (in the late 70's a CD player would set you back £500, that's £3500 in today's money and the discs were £40 each!). Right up to the digital music we have today.

However you listen to music and whatever it means to you, it's had an interesting and innovative journey! A real trip down memory lane. Thank you John for that wonderful and informative talk.

Ullesthorpe

Our meeting in February was with an audio visual presentation by Alan Parker talking about the delights of travelling around in a Motor home. He took us to Norway as well as parts of Great Britain. We stayed closer to home in March when Mike Southall, from Lutterworth Fieldworking and Archaeology group, gave us an interesting talk on the work on the excavations and finds in our area.

This group are very active in fieldworking and evacuating local sites. New volunteers always welcome. We live in a very important area for Roman, Saxon and Norman finds. There have been important digs at Shawell and Walton. There is a lot more to discover especially around High Cross which was a very important site in Roman times. Mike brought in examples of pottery, tools and even bones to look at. We heard about areas thought to be Bronze Age cremation and Roman baby burials.

Kirsty North, a health coach and personal trainer was our speaker in April with excellent advice on positive ageing, nutrition and activity for ladies ageing gracefully. Members were invited to use weights, resistance bands and given ideas for simple exercises to do at home during a normal daily routine. A fitness activity using boxing gloves caused a lot of fun. This was Kirsty's first WI talk and she was excellent. A very interesting and entertaining afternoon.



Sweptstone, Newton and Snarestone

Our April meeting was arranged by the members as a thank you to the committee for what they had done for the WI year. The speaker for the evening was Nigel Collier a local bee keeper who gave us a fascinating insight on bee keeping. Nigel has 120 colonies which are all based in and around the local area. The honey he makes is sold in local shops. Nigel continued by explaining that no colonies are the same and thus the honey will be different and its taste will be unique.

The evening was concluded with refreshments provided by members.



Anstey

Does your will need updating? You might think this was rather a gloomy topic for the WI but not at all. Kayleigh Browne, a solicitor with Wilson Browne solicitors, gave a very lively and informative talk regarding wills and lasting power of attorney. She stressed how important it is to make a will and review it every five years in line with different events in life, such as children and grandchildren. She encouraged us to consider how to protect loved ones and to include new people or to take out people in your life. She talked about the £320,000 allowance per person for inheritance tax and ways in which gifts to people and trusts can be set up. Gifts to people fall into your estate for 7 years. She mentioned the two parts to Lasting power of attorney; property and finance also health and welfare. She said they were important and both may be needed. WI members had many questions to ask and these were answered fully. Questions from members related to free wills, trusts, gifts of antiques and jewellery, common law marriage and care homes. The wine and cheese following the talk was very much appreciated. As you can see, we also had an Easter bonnet competition. WI meets every second Wednesday in the month, 7.30 pm at the Jubilee Hall. New members always welcome.



Around the Counties

Sheepy

Andy Smith, Bird enthusiast based at and around Thornton reservoir. Andy was very enthusiastic about his topic, so much so we didn't get our tea and cake until 10pm!

Andy introduced us to the area around Thornton. The reservoir is the oldest in Leicestershire dating from around 1876. Andy described the varied habitats ranging from fields to old woodlands' (80 years old), to newer woods (20 years), to the tributaries feeding the lake. Andy has a licence to ring birds, and often gets information about where they have gone! He does annual counts of birds.

He then took us through the seasons starting in winter and showing us the birds he sees at the reservoir. He shared pictures of the birds he expects to see regularly and in large numbers field fares (like a large thrush) and the shy mistle thrush. Sand martins many nesting in the manmade sand wall at Christine's farm.

Andy reports that he has seen his first swallow of the year! Also the usuals' that stay here year round.

Many wildfowl are just visiting on their migration north to breed. These include the little grebe, great crested grebe and the black necked grebe which is quite rare. Some birds are declining as habitats change due to intensive farming, and climate change, but others are enjoying a resurgence.

Andy showed us pictures of a few more unusual visitors, spoonbill, cattle egret and night heron.

Did you know that our smallest bird is the gold crest weighing just 5g compared to the wren weighing in at 10g.

Andy expects to see around 200 birds species over the year, he mentioned of them during his talk but far too many for this report!

Whissendine



At the meeting in March we had a special event, one of our members, Pat Lake, was celebrating forty years as a Whissendine WI member! She was presented with a certificate, a card, a rose bush and a badge with 40 on it! We toasted her achievement with Prosecco and Pat herself had brought homemade cake. There was lots of

remiscing about her time at WI, particularly about the many trips she organised, some with overnight stays. Well done Pat!

Our speaker for the evening was Rachel Thomas who, as well as running the local hedgehog rescue centre, Prickleback Urchin, also used to be a teacher and gave a very entertaining talk about her time in Germany teaching at an English Forces school. She regaled us with funny incidents that had happened when she had taken the children on trips out. One of these included taking them to a forest to collect wood to make shelters. So off the children went hunting for sticks when Rachel noticed another member of staff gesturing at her with a slightly panicked look on her face, it turned out that the forest was on the edge of a nudist beach so there was suddenly a lot of herding the children in a different direction!

Cromwell Group



This year Countesthorpe had the honour of hosting the annual pancake supper evening for the Cromwell Group, and what a fun evening we had. The pancake racing saw fierce competition from all the groups but after a tiebreak Leicester Ladies and Countesthorpe shared the trophy. After the races the ladies enjoyed a fish and chips supper quiz and raffle.

Glenfield



Susie gave a very interesting talk on caring for houseplants. She brought with her a large selection of plants which she used during her talk to explain how many plants grow naturally in warm environments and often on or near the ground. Therefore, they are sheltered from the sun by overhead foliage and in our homes need only draught free spots out of direct sunlight. She covered all the usual mistakes we make including overwatering, placing in the wrong spot, and even giving the roots too much room in an overlarge pot! Who would even consider that a problem? Susie answered our questions and spent time after her talk giving further advice to individual members. She made us laugh and revitalised our enthusiasm for taking better care of our house plants. It was a very enjoyable afternoon and fired with good intentions, many of us went home clutching plants we had purchased from the display.

As from May 2023, Glenfield WI will meet at 2.00pm on the third Wednesday of the month at Park House.

Sapcote

This year has been a fun packed one so far, with speakers and crafts evenings taking place each month. April found our wonderful WI members enjoying the "hoop man" John Parnell, who came as our speaker. He was brilliant to watch, sharing his talent with us all and a lot of laughs were had whilst we tried to navigate the skill of the hula hoop ourselves. It's not as easy as it looks but our members did a great job of getting stuck in and some were natural experts! It was a full room of joy.



Around the Counties

Leicester Ladies

'Crystal healing with a pendulum'

Pamela Lenthall gave a very uplifting and passionate talk last month, about the power of crystals.

She explained that she worked by checking a clients Chakra system, with a pendulum.

In Sanskrit, the word chakras means 'disk' or 'wheel' and refers to the energy centres in your body. These wheels of spinning energy each correspond to certain nerve bundles and major organs, of which there are 7 in your body.

We were each then given a pendulum which we held over the palm of our hand, if the pendulum spun clockwise, our chakra was open, if it spun anticlockwise, it was closed and if it spun side to side, our chakra was being blocked.

A volunteer then helped Pamela demonstrate how realignment could be achieved with the aid of crystals, which was fascinating.

As a bit of a sceptic, I can now say that seeing is believing.



Swinford



'Delicious cakes were baked by Swinford W.I. ladies for a coffee afternoon, to raise funds for their 2024 centenary celebrations'.

Quorn

Susie Lickman from Windowsill plants gave an everyday insight into caring for your house plants; where to place them in the home for their best chance of survival, how often they need water, what to do and what not to do sometimes. Susie had a charming way about her which made us think she was just like one of us rather than a technical expert who only used the Latin names for plants. There were lots of questions from the audience at the end as well as the opportunity to buy some of her attractive house plants.



Glenfield Park

Unfortunately our speaker for the evening had to drop out at the last minute. Luckily, Ruth Fenney a dual member of our Branch had mentioned that she might be able to prepare a talk for us. When she said it I don't suppose she thought 3 hours would be all the notice we could give her. Nevertheless she gave us a very entertaining and informative presentation on what sounds like a wonderful place to visit, the Isle of Man.

Ruth explained her family connection to the place by virtue of a marriage to a local meaning the family became based there and her parents were married there in 1939 as was she in 1965. Although her own family did not live there they spent an idyllic month there every year throughout her childhood.

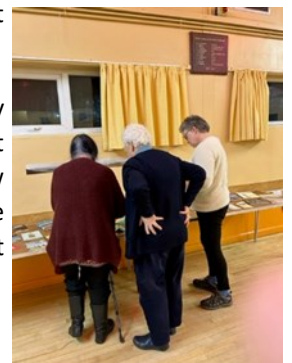
She described the island's history, with its celtic and viking heritage it has castles and museums to visit. It has a wonderful landscape, there are so many varieties of places to see. Mountains run more or less diagonally across the island with rugged coastline on the one side where the folklore is to do with giants whilst on the other there are sandy beaches and the folklore is more to do with fairies. There is a rift valley running west to east almost splitting the island in two. Additionally, of course there is the picturesque rural landscape you might expect with one of the main industries being farming along with fishing and tourism. More recently the island has become a financial centre and this has helped keeping the 70,000 population in employment.

The island was able to isolate itself during Covid and maintained a very low rate of infection and death. Their Health Service like ours is free at the point of need and pays for any treatment the population need to come to the England for which is beyond its own facilities. The same applies with further education which the Government pays for off island as appropriate.

Unlike some other self-governing Crown Dependencies the Isle of Man is not a tax haven and there is no duty free for tourists to benefit from which means the Government shares revenue with the United Kingdom under an agreement called the Common Purse.

Of course, many of the UK population only know the island for the Manx Grand Prix and the TT races which do attract a lot of tourists but by the end of Ruth's talk and her display of photographs and books about the island we knew a great deal more than before.

Altogether our evening was delightfully spent and I think a few of us at least ended it feeling that a trip there is now on our list of places to go. We owe Ruth a tremendous thank you for what she did.





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

DEADLINE for JUNE ISSUE 1st JUNE

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

Folk Dancing in Glenfield



Did you know that English Country Dancing takes place most Mondays at Glenfield Memorial Hall from 7.30 pm until 9.30 pm? Dancing is good for you physically and mentally! Why not come along and see what it's all about? You don't need a partner and we have callers who tell us what to do for each dance.

Your first taster session will be free! Afterwards you only pay £3 per session, which includes tea or coffee and biscuits!

For more information email Geoff at jennyandgeoffweston@gmail.com or Sue at susan.hodkinson50@gmail.com

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Contact: 01455 823537

patcrane33@gmail.com

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