



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes

March 2022

WI Recruitment Award

NFWI has introduced a new recruitment award scheme for 2022. All WIs now have the chance to win £200, just for increasing your membership.

There are two categories to enter, one for small WIs, and one for larger groups. Your secretary will receive all the details, also available on My WI.

The biggest reward to your WI other than a prize fund would be to secure the future of your group. Lockdown certainly created a few problems, with WIs losing members due to all sorts of circumstances.

Now is the time to get creative!

If your usual advertising is not bringing forth new members, it may be time to try new avenues.

Has your WI embraced social media? **Heart of England WI** has used Facebook to great effect (see page 3). Does your WI have a social media secretary, or just an enthusiastic member? You may be surprised by the results.

Don't wait for members to come and find you. Take your WI out and about to find new members. Rent a stall at your local market, craft fair, carnival, dog show, sports event, or any other event where you will get access to hundreds of women in one place.

Hold an open meeting for friends and family.

Maybe your WI could host an event. An afternoon tea, evening dance/disco, Crafternoon, a health walk, a sporting event, the possibilities are endless.

If you have ideas for recruiting you would like to share with other WIs, please let us know. Maybe you have already had some success in increasing your numbers recently.

WMFWI looks forward to meeting your new members!

Claire Woodland, Editor



200 Club Winner £10

150 – Pam Russell, Newton WI



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Don't forget to follow us on Facebook for regular posts and updates.

<https://www.facebook.com/WMFWI>



Chairman's Address



Hello Everyone,

It's a never-ending source of amazement to me just how quickly the time seems to fly by; here I am writing the March instalment and I've only just recovered from celebrating another new year (not that I did anything exciting, I didn't even stay up to see 2022 in!)

On my daily walks I see evidence of Spring with snowdrops, crocuses and even daffodils in full bloom and the sound of birdsong is filling the air. I love this season.



I am going into hospital for an operation at the beginning of this month so I have been using the fine weather to get the garden prepared. I have been pruning back old growth and weeding and just watching the swelling buds on my camellia and magnolia stellata. They are very close to bursting into flower and it makes the hard work so worthwhile. My north facing border likes to keep me busy by producing a great deal of moss which, despite my best endeavours, relentlessly appears every year and gives me backache as I try to grub it up. Such are the joys of being a very amateur gardener!

At Christmas I was given an amaryllis bulb as a present. I have never tried to grow one before and I have been delighted with it as it has produced three huge flowering heads and there is still another to come. It is white with very pale pink stripes and cheers me up every time I am working in the kitchen as it stands proudly on the windowsill.



Now that we are looking forward to resuming full meetings all your Trustees are working hard to provide a variety of competitions and events for you to take part in and I do hope you will avail yourselves of the opportunities offered. We are also holding three meetings where we hope to meet our members and get to know each other better. The first is on the 15th of this month and is a Zoom session to discuss business matters and which is open to all members to attend to find out what we do and to ask questions on anything that they would like to know more about. Next on July 12th is our Annual Meeting at the Hyatt Hotel and which is open to all to apply for tickets; your Secretary has all the details. Finally, in November we are holding a Federation Showcase where the competition entries and much more will be on display. More details about that will follow as they are finalized.

Enjoy the Spring and let us know what your WI is up to with articles and photos to go in this newsletter.

Lynn

News

Following our successful Zoom Business Meeting last year, we would like to hold another session this year. This will be in the form of two drop in sessions to be held on Tuesday 15th March from 10.30-11.30am and/or 7.30-8.30pm.

We hope that every WI will be represented by at least one (or more) member at one of the sessions. Any member can attend whether or not she is a member of her WI committee.

If you would like to have a specific topic discussed, please email me directly with your concerns.

Please contact Liz Galloway at liz.galloway@hotmail.com to book your places and to receive joining details.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Lynn

Over to you

Knowle WI



These were made by members of Knowle WI and are displayed in the window of Peter's Health Shop High Street Knowle and in Knowle Library.



Stephanie Withers, Knowle WI

Great Barr WI

Another successful craft morning this time The Climate Change challenge (show the love).



The Great Barr ladies had a busy morning sewing this garland which will be displayed in our local library.



Elaine Williams, Media officer, Great Barr WI

Heart of England WI Committee, like many other WIs, has often wondered how to attract new members. Word of mouth, asking friends, leaflet drops etc. Nothing has worked with any amount of success! We have attracted the odd one or two each year.

This year our very enthusiastic 'Social Media' member, Carol, decided we should move into the 21st century and put a post on the Balsall Common Facebook page advertising our January meeting. This was to be a members' meeting, mainly to discuss and gather future programme ideas, and we have always kept this type of meeting for members only. Luckily Carol had other ideas and persuaded us to go ahead. The result? Thirteen prospective members said they were interested and would like to come along! We thought we would be doing well if half that number turned up on the night, but to our amazement, they all came. We are now well into February and are still in touch with them, having seen the majority at our February meeting. Our challenge now is to persuade them to join when the new WI year starts! So the end result from our January meeting, could be several new members, plus we have loads of new programme ideas!! To other WIs - well worth a try if you have a Facebook page!"

Kathryn Shayler, Secretary, Heart of England WI



Crafts

Spring is definitely on its way (thank goodness), on my travels this last week (7th – 14th Feb), I saw the first bright green leaves of the hawthorn bush appearing as well as pussy willow. It certainly gladdens my heart, and something else that gladdens my heart is having positive responses to the Montgomerie Shield competition. Well done to Hockley Heath for being the first to respond! I will be giving some hints for the competition later. But something that is important ... as I am judging this competition, I am unable to help with individual queries, it wouldn't be fair to other institutes. Hence the occasional hints and tips.

Now for something a bit different!

Debbie

Manx Quilting



I was chatting to a fellow crafter at market two weeks ago, when I spied what I thought was log cabin quilting. How wrong was I! What my fellow crafter was doing was Manx Quilting. Now I have to admit that I have never heard of this before, so a bit of online research later I have now found out about this variation. From what I can find out, this seems to have been developed in the 19th Century, before rulers, cutters and fancy fabrics arrived. The Manx women used what there was to hand, a bit like quilters in the UK and America. The big difference being that Manx quilting is made up of folded strips of fabric and stitched together through at least 3 layers of fabric using large stitches. Also, the Manx quilters used their hands as measurements because this would be a constant.

You may have noticed from the illustration that the finished design looks very similar to the American Log cabin design, this is where my confusion started! But just like their American cousins, hearth and home was important.

In Manx quilting the central square is usually red, this is to symbolise hearth and home. There is an excellent blog/website where you can get full instructions for this fascinating regional craft. Just visit <https://www.diaryofaquilter.com/how-to-piece-a-manx-quilt-block/>

Montgomerie Trophy

For those institutes who are going to take part in this competition, I thought I'd better include some hints and tips to help you along.

- 1 – It helps if you can get your base board early in the project, a cake base board will be useful, remember to cover it, I don't want to see any shiny bits!
- 2 – Embroidery is a different craft category altogether, but you can embellish your creation.
- 3 – Think about the weights of yarns when knitting and crocheting. Are they appropriate for the size of your design?
- 4 – There is a wide range of different types of yarn available, textured, metallic, cotton, acrylic, tweed, wool etc. All of these can be used to great effect.

I look forward to receiving more entries. Don't forget ... I need to have your expression of interest by the end of July, just in case the Federation needs to get another craft judge.

Good luck everyone!

Federation Event 2022

Crafts are teaming up with Public Affairs on Wednesday 2nd November at The Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham.

This will showcase the two Federation Craft Competitions, the County Craft Collection and craft related ideas from Liz Galloway and the Public Affairs committee to tie in with current campaigns from NFWI. It is hoped that doors will open from 12:00pm and finish at 5:30pm. There is a small café on site and the BMI will provide tea and coffee for us.



Further details will be given to those institutes taking part later this year.

Competitions

VALERIE DAGGATT COMPETITION FOR CREATIVE WRITING

As part of the celebrations of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee we are asking members to write a story based around their idea of the most important contribution to women's education, health and happiness that has happened over the past 70 years of her reign. So much has happened during this time including the contraceptive pill, the relaxation of the divorce laws, equal pay, greater opportunities in the world of work—the list of improvements in our lives goes on and on. I am sure all of you have tales to tell so please enter the competition and let us hear your stories. The cup will be presented to the winning writer at the Annual Meeting and we hope she will be able to read her story to everyone there.

Your secretary has the details.

LADY DENMAN CUP COMPETITION

This year the competition is to write a piece either comical, serious, fact or fiction using no more than 500 words which reflects the powerful impact when a community comes together. The entry requirements have changed this year and members are required to enter directly with NFWI and not via their Federations. Further information is available from My WI.

HUXLEY CUP COMPETITION

This year the Huxley Cup Competition, supported by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, invites WIs to design a small community space for wellbeing and wildlife. The wildlife aspect of the entry should focus specifically on the theme of: Our Fabulous Flying Friends—think about birds, bees, butterflies, moths and bats.

The competition is open to all members: entries must be submitted on behalf of the WI and not as an individual. Members are encouraged to work together to compose a design as only one entry per WI will be accepted. Further information is available from My WI.

MONTGOMERIE TROPHY

Institutes are asked to produce a tabletop display on a base board no larger than 46cm x 46cm (18" x 18") on the theme of "Beside the Sea".

This can be knitted, crochet, feltwork or a combination of these skills.

Institutes wishing to enter are advised to look at "On with the Show", the NFWI handbook. It gives guidance on exhibiting and judging criteria. It is available online at <https://mywi.thewi.org>

Rules: -

1. All items made are to be of similar proportion and scale and in keeping with the size of the board.
2. The board must be NO larger than 46cm x 46cm (18"x 18")
3. The board must be covered and to form part of the competition theme
4. Appropriate toy filling must be used
5. As the entry will be judged from all sides, no backboard will be allowed, and
6. Judging will be in accordance with "On with the Show" guidelines and the judge's decisions are final.

Please note judging will take place in October 2022 and it is the individual Institutes responsibility to set up and display their entries on the day. Tables will be provided.

TRUSTEES TROPHY

This year's competition is on the theme of 'TREES'.

This competition for members is a photograph based on the theme of Trees.

- 1) The finished photograph/print must be no more the 7" x 5"
- 2) Can either be in colour or black/white
- 3) The photograph can be mounted.

The entries will be judged at our Federation event in October, so this will give you all plenty of time to come up with a stunning photograph!

Please note that the judge's decision is final.

Public Affairs



Show the Love took place on 14 February, St Valentine's Day and there are ideas and action packs on the Climate Coalition's website, www.theclimatecoalition.org

It is hoped that WIs will not take the date too seriously and will continue with activities throughout February and beyond. Let us know what your WI is doing, and don't forget to post the Postcard from your WI Life.

Climate Change – a reminder of things we can do at a local level.

Try to find out more about how sustainable food production is and make principled choices as a consumer. Consider your options carefully in relation major issues such as housing, energy use, your carbon footprint, the natural environment, gardening, wildlife and resources; transport, public and private. I'm sure you have many more areas in mind and have already been planning action..

Actions we can take

- Pursuing crafting initiatives, green hearts, No More Loopholes bracelets. Pillar box toppers attract attention but members can build on this introduction to spread the word and explain the message to others ... **time to speak out.**
- Show the Love / What has your WI done?

Send us your photographs



The Action Pack for **See the Signs** was launched at the end of 2021 and is available to download from our website. It is detailed, instructive and very helpful to anyone who thinks they may have signs of ovarian cancer.

There are examples of first-hand experience from those who have been diagnosed and treated. It also includes ideas on how to take part in the campaign.

International Women's Day is on Tuesday 08 March. Events such as marches will take place on the 05/06, the weekend before.

Bees and butterflies



This is the time of year to start thinking about sowing those pollinator friendly plant seeds ... but first you need to get hold of some! There are many suppliers now advertising bee, butterfly and bird friendly mixes and most leading seed

merchants have one or more versions as do leading bee, butterfly, bird/wildlife charities. Some are wild flower seeds, others annuals for patio pots, borders, some fragrant mixes and of course you can always buy plants such as lavender, an all-time favourite. Generally, the best plants for pollinators have single flowers where access to pollen is easy.

It's also a good time to set up your bee hotel!

Good plants for pollinators:

The list is lengthy and can be found online but some of the best are lavender, borage, butterfly bush (buddleia), primrose, bluebells, heather, ivy, sedum and honeysuckle, foxgloves, and verbena.



Birds and the nesting season



Feeding birds becomes less crucial once winter is past but there's still need for fresh water both for them to drink and to bathe in. Last year, I found my small bubble fountain in a terra cotta pot was extremely popular!

Do make sure you've got your mechanical hedge cutting done early this year, i.e before March and watch carefully where birds are nesting as you'll need to leave them in peace until late August. If you watch carefully and know where the nests are, it's possible to prune carefully by, as long as you're avoiding their nests and not disturbing them. If in any doubt, search on Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 'bird nesting season' or <http://rspb.org>

Amphibians

Don't forget to check any pond or damp area to see if there's spawn that will become the next generation of frogs, toads or newts.

The newts in my small pond will emerge from the adjacent stone wall about this time of year and make for the water. They'll need shelter like overhanging plants to give the little ones cover when they emerge.

The best way that we can help our declining amphibian numbers is to make a small pond in the garden, ideally about 2 metres across, but even a much smaller area or a patio pool is likely to help. My frogs travel some distance across damp grass from garden to garden, pond to pond.



What's On

Dates for your Diary 2022

15.03.2022	Federation Zoom Drop In 10.30am or 7.30pm
22.03.2022	Lariat Making Workshop with Jackie Gregory
29.03.2022	Lariat Making Workshop with Jackie Gregory
10.03.2022	Campaigning Workshop Zoom Drop in 7.30pm
23.03.2022	Campaigning Workshop Zoom Drop in 7.30pm
04.05.2022	ACWW Walk Cannon Hill Park
11.06.2022	NFWI Annual Meeting Liverpool
07.07.2022	WMFVI Annual Meeting The Hyatt
02.11.2022	Craft Showcase The BMI
03.12.2022	Carol Service St Martins in the Bullring

ACWW

Pamela Griffiths is planning a walk around Cannon Hill Park on **04 May 2022 - Meet at 11am**

Cannon Hill Park is the most popular park in the city, covering 250 acres consisting of formal, conservation, woodland. and sports areas. It also contains Birmingham Nature Centre and the MAC theatre and gives access to the River Rea Walkway. Café and toilets are onsite.

The nominal time for the full walk (5 kms) is approximately one hour but many shorter options to return to the centre are available.

WMFVI Campaigns Champions

Join us for a free 90-minute Zoom

Thursday 10th March at 7.30pm or
Wednesday 23rd March at 7.30pm

Programme Outline

- 19.30 Welcome & Introductions
- 19.45 Fun Quiz on WI campaigns
- 20.00 National campaign resources and activities. Overview: NFWI speaker
- 20.20 Discussion to identify issues and opportunities.
- 20.40 Information: where to find it and next steps
- 20.50 Feedback and conclusions.

To register and receive joining details, please contact Liz Galloway

liz.galloway@hotmail.com



HM The Queen will become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee this year. Only 2 monarchs have reigned for longer: King Bhumibol of Thailand who reigned for 70 years and 126 days and Louis XIV of France (The Sun King) who reigned for 72 years and 110 days.

The WI is proud to be taking part in the celebrations in June and will have more details coming soon about how you can get involved

The Queen has been a member of the WI for an incredible 78 years having joined when she was still Princess Elizabeth. She caused much amusement at our WI Centenary celebrations in the Albert Hall (2016) when the cake proved too difficult to cut.



Photo: Belfast Telegraph.

If you have ideas on how you're going to mark the occasion, do let us know. liz.galloway@hotmail.com



I'm looking for photos of your ideas, achievements and activities in 2021/22. I know we've got some first-rate photographers but it's not the quality of the photo that's important as long as it tells the story of your activity or creation. Any camera is fine, Smartphone, SLR or point and shoot, even a box Brownie, if you've got one!

You sent some wonderful photos last year, I put them together for the rolling presentation before the Annual Meeting at the Hyatt. I'm hoping to do the same this year but also to make them available on disc as I realise that many of you may not be able attend the meeting but would still like to see everyone's photos. I hope to be able to supply a disc to each WI that requests one (at no charge).

Please e-mail me with photos attached. Depending on the file size, either send them in multiple emails or else put them into Powerpoint or similar format to send.

liz.galloway@hotmail.com

