



# Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes  
November 2021

## Chairman's Address

Hello Everyone,

Just when we were thinking that summer had gone, we were treated to a lovely September. When I was teaching, I could almost guarantee that whatever the summer holiday weather had been, as soon as the September term started it would almost always herald a spell of sunshine.



I read an article in the newspaper the other day which said that the dry weather in September meant that this would be a yellow autumn and that the leaves would not turn red until we had a spell of rain. Well, we certainly had that earlier this month so I am keeping a close eye on the trees to see if they change from yellow to red before the leaves drop.

After years of the school year beginning in September, I usually get a real feeling of starting afresh at this time of year. It rather feels like that, this year in particular, as we pick up the pieces and hold meetings again. I have already had invitations to WI meetings and it has been a joy to meet members again. I would like to try to visit all WIs before my time in office ends which is quite a challenge as I have already missed nearly 12 months because of enforced restrictions.

At the time of writing, I am putting the final touches to arrangements for the Annual Meeting next week. There will be a full write up of the occasion in the November edition of the Cog as the number of attendees is restricted this year.

Throughout lockdown I have fielded requests for information about our WIs from over 200 potential new members. It would be wonderful to think that they have all joined now that normal activities have resumed as our total membership has declined for various reasons during the pandemic. Perhaps we could kickstart a recruitment drive this Autumn with each and everyone of us trying to bring a new person along to a meeting before 2022 becomes the date on the calendar.

In the garden I am taking out all the summer bedding plants, taking cuttings and planting the bulbs. I am eagerly awaiting delivery of my order of new bulbs which is due to arrive soon. Traditionally, I used to put the bulbs in during October half-term week and although I have no need to organise my life along school term lines any more I find old habits die hard.

I hate the clocks going back and the long dark nights ahead but, paradoxically, I do like to snuggle down with the curtains drawn against the dark and the heating on!  
Enjoy Halloween if you can.

Lynn



Don't forget to follow us on Facebook.

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

## Mere Green WI

Mere Green WI hosted an afternoon tea in a member's garden in August.

Members also attended from Four Oaks and Boldmere WI groups.

During the event £250 of funds were raised for Breast Cancer Charity through the sale of raffle tickets.

Well done ladies!



Article and photos provided by Danielle Piotet Mere Green WI



## Skittles

It was really exciting that the skittles evening planned for September 25th went ahead. There were thirty-nine participants made up of members and a few, very welcome, husbands.

There were fewer players than usual but it was agreed that the event should go ahead due the length of time since anything had been offered. Success was varied, it must be quite a skill to send down two balls and not disturb any of the skittles.



Delicious fish and chips were delivered and enjoyed at 8.15pm. After four rounds the raffle was drawn and prizes awarded.

My thanks go to Lynn Smith for her support on the night and her participation in the winning team, Chris Sears who covered many of the essential jobs and everyone who stood up the skittles after each turn. It all contributed to a successful and enjoyable evening. Let's hope that this is the first of many.

*Christine Dainty*

Chair Leisure and Well-being committee

## STREETLY EVENING WI

In July, Streetly Evening WI met for the first time since lockdown for a picnic.

Fifteen enthusiastic ladies congregated for a long-awaited social meet up.

The clouds were heavy, rain was threatening, but we were not deterred. The heavens did not open and we spent two enjoyable hours catching up with old friends and sharing news.



project Linus blankets

In August we met indoors for the first time at our new venue and were well entertained by one of our book club groups with their 'radio' version of Little Women. It was thoroughly enjoyed by twenty-four members and four guests. It set the scene for our future meetings.

In September our speaker, Ian Bott, took us on 'A Mystery Tour of the Midlands' with accompanying slides. Ian is a favourite with our group, his talks are always informative and entertaining. At this meeting ladies who had been creating items for the Linus Project brought them in and displayed their incredibly colourful and beautifully knitted and crocheted blankets. The ladies commented how therapeutic they found the project during lockdown, it gave them a purpose, a focus and a feeling of doing something worthwhile.

Yours, Nola

Chair of Streetly Evening W.I.



Photo above shows ladies enjoying a picnic in the park

## Knowle WI Craft & Produce Show and Shoebox Appeal

Knowle WI in September held our triennial Craft & Produce Show. The theme was "Sharing the love through lockdown" and this was arranged and discussed at our Zoom meetings during lockdown.

We were fortunate to have our meeting in the Greswolde Hotel, Knowle, for the first time and it was well represented in all 4 sections, (1) Photography class 1 and class 2, (2) Cookery class 1 and class 2, (3) Art & Craft and (4) Floral Art sections. The entries were much appreciated by all and we do hope that this traditional feature of the WI will continue for many years.

This meeting was followed by a talk from Glen Duggins from the "Teams4U" Shoebox Appeal a charity providing shoeboxes for disadvantaged children at Christmas. She showed examples of how simple games could be made by re-using and recycling materials as well as detailing the challenge of collecting gifts, filling and wrapping and distributing boxes.

The photo below is of Glen receiving gifts and knitted donations from Knowle WI presented to her by Judith Ewings our Representative for the Appeal and enabled the collection to be ongoing.

Stephanie Withers  
Knowle WI



## Public Affairs Report October 2021: Liz Galloway

### Key Points



#### No More Violence: 16 Days of Action

From the 25 November – 10 December we are encouraging members to take part in the 16 Days of Action Against Gender-Based Violence. Building on the success of previous years, we are asking members to get involved by building links with your local women's refuge.



As the largest women's voluntary organisation in the UK, the WI will be using our platform to stand shoulder to shoulder with women and girls around the world and will be calling on the [UK Government to deliver a COP26](#) that provides a fair deal for women and girls everywhere in the fight against climate change.

On MyWI you can find our **COP26 resources**, including our COP26 action pack and No More Loopholes bracelet craft template; fact files, a PowerPoint Presentation and script, and a COP26 quiz.



To build up as much momentum as possible in the run-up to COP26 on The Whole Story campaign, WIs and WI members across England, Wales and the Islands will be encouraged to organise a meeting with their MP on **Friday, 8th October** and urge constituency MPs to do everything they can to raise awareness of the need for **COP26** to deliver ambitious global climate agreements without any loopholes. Members are urged to arrange a meeting with their MP and can present your MP with your hand-crafted 'No More Loopholes' bracelet.



A new logo for 'Stop Modern slavery which is a complex crime that takes a number of different forms. It encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Read more and find out how you can get involved on MyWI. **Write to your MP - The action pack, wallet cards, webinar registration and template letter can all be downloaded** and attend the **Stop Modern Slavery Webinar: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021.**



On 9th August, the IPCC released a landmark report into the science of climate change. First rate resource packs covering a wide range of subject matter is available on the Climate Coalition's website as well as the opportunity to sign up to petitions on avoiding Climate Change.



Look on the website to see how you can support Climate Change action. "The window of opportunity to protect the things we love is closing - but the good news is that it hasn't slammed shut yet."

#### STOP PRESS

Public Affairs team have planned a Campaigns Workshop to find out more about members' views on key campaigns and how they can get involved. January 2022, flyer available at Annual Meeting.

*(I'm still available to take to WIs about Climate Change and/or Campaigns at your regular meeting)*

## The Craft Page.



Autumn is well and truly here and by the time you get to read this page we shall have had our first get together as a Federation at our Annual Meeting at the Hyatt Hotel. I have to admit that I love the golds, yellows, greens, browns and copper colours that autumn brings. One year (I keep promising myself) I will crochet a blanket in all these lovely colours!

### CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations are due to our first ever participants in the inaugural Montgomery Trophy. This you may remember was a depiction of a thistle in any medium. **The winner** was **Carol Morden** of Four Oaks WI with an informal patchwork landscape with a Thistle embroidered on.



**Second** was **Judith Ewing** – Knowle WI, with a pewter brooch.



**Third place** goes to **Kim Slivinski** – Yardley WI with a charming cross stitch design.



Well, done to all 3 of you.

### Craft Trophies from January 2022.

With the introduction of the Montgomery Trophy this year, it now means that we can award two trophies for craft from 2022 onwards. It has been decided at Board level that the following will happen in future: -

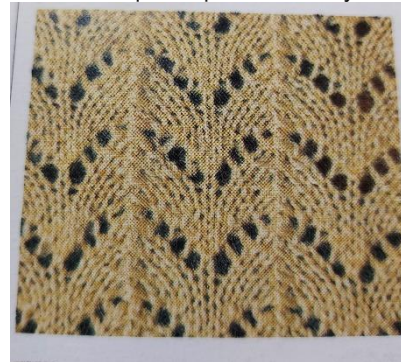
**The Trustees Trophy** will be for 'Hard' crafts, by this we mean, photography, jewellery, card making, woodwork etc. In other words, something that is not textile based.

**The Montgomery Trophy** will be for 'Soft' crafts, by this we mean, knitting, crochet, embroidery, felting etc. in other words, something that is textile based.

Details/schedules of the new competitions for 2022 will be sent out to institutes in the New Year.

### **Block of the month**

Now that we have come to the end of the Trustees Challenge, the Project Linus blankets, I thought I would finish with perhaps one of my favourite patterns.



**Horseshoes:** - This is worked over multiples of 10 sts plus 1.

**Row 1:** K1, \*ym, K3, sl1, K2tog, pssso, K3, yrn, K1\*

**Row 2 and alternate rows:** purl.

**Row 3:** K1, \*K1, yrn, K2, sl1, K2tog, pssso, K2, yrn, K2\*

**Row 5:** K1, \*K2, yrn, K1, sl1, k2tog, pssso, K1, yrn, K3\*

**Row 7:** K1, \*K3, yrn, sl1, K2tog, pssso, yrn, K4.

## The Craft Page 2.



### Lockdown Projects



This beautiful quilt was on display at the first meeting back of Erdington Carnegie WI. Members has fashioned individual blocks, which members of the committee put together.

If your institute have been involved with lockdown project or are involved with other craft projects, then please send photos and details and I will do my best to include them on the craft pages.

### Advance Notices

#### Workshops ...

##### Door Swag

I will be holding a Zoom workshop on an Eco-Friendly Door Swag on **TUESDAY** 23<sup>rd</sup> November, starting at 10:30am. If you are interested in attending this workshop, please email me at [arkinstall.mama@outlook.com](mailto:arkinstall.mama@outlook.com) and I will email you nearer the date with the zoom log in and a list of materials required. If there are more than 20 participants, the I will put on extra workshops. Apologies for the wrong date in last month's magazine!

### Lariat Necklaces: -



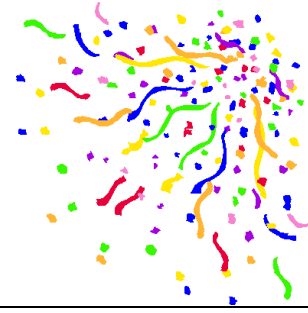
Jackie Gregory has very kindly offered to host a lariat necklace workshop in her home either in March or April 2022. At the moment the Craft Team are wanting to know how many members are interested in attending. Jackie can host a maximum of 10 people at a time but is more than happy to repeat the workshop. Please email Debbie Arkinstall if you are interested in attending.

Debbie Arkinstall



## Congratulations

to all our WIs and members who were awarded Trophies and Certificates at the Annual Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021



Anniversaries - 2020		
Dickens & FH	25 <sup>th</sup> and 75 <sup>th</sup>	
Berkswell	100 <sup>th</sup>	
Castle Bromwich	100 <sup>th</sup>	
Solihull	100 <sup>th</sup>	
Anniversaries - 2021		
Park Hall	50 <sup>th</sup>	
Eastern Green	75 <sup>th</sup>	
Barston	100 <sup>th</sup>	
Great Barr	100 <sup>th</sup>	
Valerie Daggatt Cup 2021	Gillian Stephens	HalesOwen WI
Valerie Daggatt Cup 2020 (A Christmas story)	Dorothy Shaw	Knowle WI
Trustee Trophy (table runner)	Carol Morden	Four Oaks WI
Montgomerie Shield (thistle)	Carol Morden	Four Oaks WI
Rose Trophy less than 30	Berkswell WI	
Rose Trophy greater than 30	Meriden WI	

### 200 Club Grand prize draw winners

#### Congratulations to the winners of the 200 -club grand prize draw October 2021

1<sup>st</sup> prize £100.00 Number 80 S Withers, Knowle WI

2<sup>nd</sup> prize £70.00 Number 87 B Green, Hobs Moat WI

3<sup>rd</sup> prize £50.00 Number 68 E Black, Olton WI





**Please join us for our Annual Carol Service**  
**to be held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – 11.00am at St Martin’s in the Bullring.**  
**Cost is £7.00 and includes Sherry and Mince pies. Pay on the door**

## Dates for your Diary 2021

17.11.2021	Zoom Astronomy talk with Sue Dipple at 7.30pm
02.12.2021	Worcester Christmas Fayre
04.12.2021	Carol Service – St Martin’s in the Bullring

## The Federation table cloth

At the Annual Meeting our Archivist Mrs Jackie Gregory gave a talk on the history of the West Midlands Federation table cloth that is used at our Annual Meeting and other special occasions.

The table cloth was made from 1975 – 1980 by outstandingly talented members  
 Gill Wiley, Heart of England  
 Margaret Bottrell, Newton  
 and Shirley Liefield, of  
 Walmley WI and D Beddows.

Details of these clever ladies are embroidered in one corner on the underside of the cloth.



Here are a few photographs taken at the Annual Meeting of entries to the Trustee Trophy, Montgomerie Shield competition for craft and Rose Trophy winners.

Trustee Trophy and Montgomerie Shield winner, Carol Morden, Four Oaks WI



Rose Trophy for increase in new members



Berkswell WI

Meriden WI

## How one WI became involved in the Climate Change Campaign



Here's their story in their own words

We held our event on 26th September for The Great Big Green Week, we made 26 sections for the stitches to survival scarf and a few hundred moths for the Moths to a Flame project. These have all been sent to Glasgow where they will be displayed during COP 26. The MP Saquib Bhatti kindly attended our event and plans to meet with us after he attends COP26 to find a way forward in the community. The week before our event we put out 8 post box toppers which drew interest from The Solihull Observer who wrote two articles about us. The Birmingham Mail via their Facebook page Birmingham Live who ran articles and we were on Solihull Live Facebook page as well as many local group pages. We made and sold some bags to help cover our costs.



left: Members prepare panels made for the Stitches for Survival and Moths to a Flame campaigns, to be displayed at the COP26 Conference in Glasgow (31 Oct - 12 Nov 2021). Right: Postbox toppers around Knowle and Bentley Heath



At our recent WMFWI Annual Meeting, we were very fortunate in hearing Julie Summers, (author of *Jambusters*) speak to us about the influence wielded by the WI in the second world war, a time of struggle and hardship.

She reminded us that key women were advisors to government departments and were respected as leaders on the home front. Not only was it a very interesting talk, but also told us many things we'd not known about the WI. Learn more about Julie's writing on

[www.juliesummers.co.uk](http://www.juliesummers.co.uk)



Ladies of Packwood and Bentley Heath WI at their community event with their MP, Saquib Bhatti. L-R: Barbara Davison, Judith Holmes, Kathy Jephcott, Pat Middleton, Anne Wikes, Pat Miller, Liz Beedie.

As Chair of Public Affairs, a great deal of my work is to do with campaigns and I do wonder whether you WI members recognise how influential and valuable you can be. Many WIs are very active and spreading the message in a personal and local context ... *making green hearts, 'no more loopholes' bracelets, holding local events and now the wonderful postbox toppers and many more ideas.* Also, we set an example in the wider context of food, water and energy use, and aspects of the natural environment. *How I'd also love to see most WIs raising the profile of combatting global warming to the wider political level by engaging MPs and supporting environmental campaigning groups in lobbying government. We all have an excellent opportunity at COP26.* In the New Year, WMFWI Public Affairs will be running a workshop on Campaigns: I do hope you'll all send a delegate because ***our WI voice matters!***  
Liz Galloway.

