



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes

October 2022

End of an Era



The last official photograph of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

It was just a few short weeks ago that the nation celebrated the longest reign of any Monarch throughout history.

We took part in joyous activities and events. We shared our celebrations with each other through these pages in photographs. Although we all knew the Queen's great age and worsening health, none of us could have expected her sudden death, barely two days after greeting her 15th Prime minister, Liz Truss.

We would like you to share with us, your experiences of meeting the Queen, paying your respects in London or elsewhere. Any crafts or memorials, since the loss was announced.

Claire Woodland, Edit

200 Club Winner £10

147 – M Page, Newton WI



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



Chairman's Address



Hello Everyone,

Here I am writing this for the October edition of the Cog and I haven't yet had a summer holiday! That situation will be remedied this coming weekend when we set off for a week's stay in Northumberland. This will be the third time we have ventured to the far north of

England and I am really looking forward to relaxing in the beautiful scenery that is so abundant in that lovely county. I hope that the rain we have had during this past week (although sorely needed by our gardens) will have moved elsewhere by September 10th so that I don't drown whilst exploring places such as Berwick and Lindisfarne. There are several National Trust properties to visit as well so I won't be doing too much sitting down.

At Federation level the Trustees have been busy formulating a programme of events for the coming year and we hope every member will find something that interests them; it might be a new craft, a new sport to try, a zoom speaker to listen to, a theatre visit or an outing to an unfamiliar place but whatever it is, it will always be with friends who will share the experience and enjoy being together.

We are also intending to provide training sessions in October for new (and established) Officers and all Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers will be welcome to attend to share best practice and catch up on new ideas. We need your input as you are the ones who keep our WIs alive. We will also be giving advice on managing MCS and helping those who are not altogether happy with using social media how to get started.

This will require a big input from all of our members but we need to come up with ideas to make our WIs attractive to possible new members to encourage them to join us so please get your thinking caps on and help us to revitalise after the debilitating effects of the pandemic lockdowns.

After that plea I am going to go away and enjoy my week's break before getting back to the nitty-gritty of being your Federation Chair.

Lynn

IN MEMORIAM

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II



This month The West Midlands Federation joined with the Royal Family, the Nation, the Commonwealth, and most of the rest of the world in mourning the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Over 10 days it seemed as though the world held its breath as we witnessed the coming together in friendship and shared sorrow of people from many nations who came to pay their respects and to watch the glorious pomp and circumstance that our nation is so good at doing as we laid Her Majesty to rest beside her beloved Philip.

Queen Elizabeth exemplified everything that makes this country the great nation that we love. Her steadfastness of purpose and, above all, her commitment to duty meant that she was admired and respected the world over. To paraphrase the words of President Macron of France "to us she was OUR Queen, to the world she was THE Queen".

Our thoughts and condolences are with the Royal family who have lost their matriarch and who have so admirably borne the burden of duty and tradition amidst their grief and with the eyes of the world watching.

On behalf of the West Midlands Federation, I have signed the Book of Condolences and have sent our heartfelt commiserations to the members of Sandringham WI who have lost their long-standing President as well as their Queen.

Many members of our Federation will only have known the Queen as their monarch, but older members will have known King George VI and will remember that they first learnt these words to the National Anthem.

God save our gracious King

Lynn

Meet the Trustees 2022/23

Lynn Smith - Chairman



I have been a member of Bournville WI for 14 years which I joined following my retirement after nearly 40 years in the teaching profession. I served on its committee first as Programme Secretary and then as President for 4 years.

I joined the Board of Trustees 11 years ago and have been Chairman of the Music & Drama subcommittee, Resolutions Officer, Vice Chair and WI Adviser. Since October 2020 I have been Federation Chair and as such sit as an ex officio member on all of our subcommittees.

When I am not wearing my WI hat I am a U3A member and I enjoy gardening, going to concerts and the theatre, visiting National Trust properties, playing bridge, canasta and mahjong, walking and above all being with my family and friends.

Iris Montgomery – Treasurer



I belong to Hobs Moat WI. I joined WI over thirty years ago, have been a Trustee for over 22 years, and County Treasurer for 20 years. I have also had a 3 year period as Federation Chairman, before our current Chair took over.

Hobbies when time allows, include reading and sewing.

Liz Galloway – Vice Chair



A founder member of Kings Norton Afternoon since 2011, I've served as President and Treasurer and am now a Committee Member. I became a Trustee in 2015 and Chair the Public Affairs Committee dealing with national campaigns and environmental matters as a Climate Ambassador. I've been a member of Music and Drama Sub-Committee for five years.

I'm always delighted to give an illustrated talk to a WI and hope to continue doing this as Vice-Chair – you'll find me in the Speaker List.

In my own time, I'm a keen gardener, traveller and photographer, and a volunteer contributor to the Trauma Research Group based at the QE Hospital.

Cathryn Marsh – Vice Chair



I joined Walmley Evening WI about 12 years ago. I served on the Committee and then became Secretary and then President and now coordinate our Knit and Natter Group.

I joined the Board of Trustees in 2019 and have recently taken on the role of Resolutions Officer and I am about to undertake WI Advisor Training.

I enjoy doing my garden, reading, walking and visiting places of interest. I am also a member of Sutton Coldfield Flower Club and very much enjoy my Silver Swans Ballet Class.

Jackie Poyner – WI Advisor



I have been a member of Bournville WI for 6 years and am currently their secretary. I joined the Board of Trustees in 2021 after completing my WI Advisers Course. I now Chair the Leisure and Well-Being subcommittee, as well as being a member of the Membership and the Entertainment subcommittees.

Away from the WI I enjoy spending time on my allotment, watching Warwickshire County Cricket Club, trying to complete numerous craft projects and spending time with family and friends

Kim Slivinski – MCS/Admin



I have been a WI member since 2008 when I was appointed as Federation Secretary and subsequently Federation Treasurer until October 2020. I look after the Membership Communications System (MCS) for the Federation, take minutes at our meetings and do general Admin work.

My hobbies are enjoying my early retirement with my husband, keeping chickens, gardening, visiting places I have never been before.

Claire Woodland - Media



I'm a founder member and President of Victory Belles WI. I Edit the Cog in the Tree Newsletter. I am also the Media Committee Chair.

I am an Antiques and Vintage Dealer. My hobbies include 1940's re-enactment, swing dancing, walking, allotment gardening and socializing with friends.

Joining the WI is the best decision I've ever made and provided me with the most amazing and inspiring friends.

Julie Afridi Martin –
Entertainment



I'm President of Yardley WI and Chair of the Entertainment Committee.

I enjoy singing at the top of my voice, performing, socialising, crafting, making costumes and writing poetry.

Christine Sears –
Bulb Co-Ordinator



I have been a member of Green Lane WI for nearly 40 years. I was secretary for many years and am now president for the 2nd time.

I joined the board of trustees in 2019. I am now bulb co-ordinator and I serve on the leisure and wellbeing committee.

My hobbies are reading walking and best of all having lunch with friends.

Dawn Statham – Public
Affairs



I have been a member of Park Hall WI and have since changed to Victory Belles WI.

I joined the board of trustees in 2021 after a period as a member of the Public affairs committee. I am interested in our campaigns and climate change matters.

I work full time. When time allows my hobbies include crafting, reading, and amateur radio. I like to learn new things and enjoy research.

The board of trustees are a team of volunteers who work on behalf of all members. We come from a variety of backgrounds, careers, and locations. Some younger trustees work full time, and part time, you do not have to be retired to join us!

Each year the board welcomes new members, maybe next year it could be you. If you think you could spare the time to help out, please let us know. All sub-committees would welcome new volunteers.

Over to you

Great Barr WI



September craft morning, the ladies tried their hand at a pressed flower picture, and didn't they do well. None of the ladies had ever done this sort of craft before and really enjoyed themselves.

Elaine Williams, Great Barr WI

Here are some of the flowers being laid in memory of our Queen, outside St Pauls, Birmingham.



Kim Slivinski, Yardley WI

Halesowen WI visited West Midlands Police Museum in September. Museum volunteers delighted in locking our members in the cells!



I visited the **PoliNations** display in Victoria Square in September. Very interesting and an amazing display that looks as though it's always been there.



The artificial trees were amazing.



There were lots of people meandering through the "garden". Artificial and natural trees, plants and flowers creating a wonderful display.

Cathryn Marsh, Walmley Evening WI

Bournville WI enjoyed a talk given by a member of the Midland Freewheelers at their September meeting. They are a group of volunteers who deliver blood, serums, medicine and anything else needed by hospitals, care homes and patients free of charge. They operate a 24/7 365 days a year service saving the NHS thousands of pounds per year. They are a registered charity and depend entirely upon donations to keep going. www.midlandfreewheelers.co.uk



The photo shows Bournville WI's President Margaret Wills seated on one of the powerful motorcycles used by the volunteers.

Lynn Smith, Bournville WI

Public Affairs



Make a Match Since 2019, the number of stem cell donors in the UK has fallen by 62%. There is an urgent need to reverse this trend. September was Blood Cancer Awareness Month and marks the start of a

new Make a Match craft action and members are being asked to create a blood droplet shaped article which may be a felt bag charm, a cross stitch hoop or an applique badge. All can be made at a simple level and are intended as conversation starters. Don't forget, you can recycle materials or use crafting scraps.

A postcard is available for handing out at events and can be used to record contact details of those wishing to learn more about becoming a stem cell donor. It's hoped that some will be available at the Craft Showcase at the Birmingham and Midland Institute (02 Nov 2022).

ADHD and Autism Campaign:

Two webinars will be hosted by NFWI during the autumn to familiarise members with the campaign and to learn more about ADHD and Autism.

Friday 21 October 2022: ADHD Webinar

Friday 11 November 2022: Autism Webinar

Registration is by means of an online form on MyWI. You can also request an action toolkit.



Anne Jones has been leading the WI in supporting the **Warm this Winter** campaign calling for urgent action to help people this winter, for action on household insulation, more investment in renewable energy and a move away from oil and gas. You can sign up and see more detail on MyWI.

A Cost of Living Hub on MyWI has been set up to guide members towards sources of advice and support.

Violence Against Women: 16 Days of Activism (25 Nov – 10 Dec)

Members are being encouraged to take part. This year your Public Affairs Committee has organised a series of talks on Zoom on 23 November which will be hosted by Harborne Village WI. A flyer will be sent out to all Secretaries and appears in this edition of CoG. This is an opportunity to hear first class speakers on aspects of this WI campaign and you're encouraged to register for the event.



See the Signs: Around 7,500 new ovarian cancer cases are diagnosed each year. If you have any of the symptoms, be on the safe side and check with your GP. A simple blood test is all that's needed. For more information, thewi.org.uk Our Campaigns.

THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK

Have you organised your event yet? (24 September – 02 October) Many WIs are holding panel events, walks, allotment tours, and community action days. It's a great opportunity to put yourselves out there and to attract new members.



Local News on Recycling: Some Garden Centres are now taking in empty compost bags, bird food bags and plastic plant pots for recycling.

Information provided by Barbara Davison, Climate Ambassador, Packwood and Bentley Heath WI.

What's On

TRUSTEES CHALLENGE 2022

I know that many of you have been beavering away and buying, crafting and creating wonderful, knitted, sewn and crocheted articles for the shoebox appeal for TEAMS 4U

All shoebox contributions need to be in no later than FRIDAY 28th OCT

I will be happy to receive all donations at my house.

JULIE AFRIDI MARTIN 28 Vicarage Road, Yardley, Bham

B33 8PH My phone number is 0121 784 7010

Please call to arrange your drop offs.

If Acocks Green is closer to you please contact me for the details of Chris who is the coordinator for TEAMS 4U in B'ham and I can give you her details.

I am aware that some groups are some distance from Yardley. If you have difficulty dropping off contributions, please contact me to discuss this. WI Groups local to each other might like to link and just do a single drop off too.

If you do want to contribute a full shoe box please follow these instructions.

- Step 1. Find an old shoebox
- Step 2. Wrap it with Christmas paper
- Step 3. Fill it with useful gifts

Full or part used rolls of Christmas wrapping paper for wrapping boxes would also be welcome.

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ANSWERED

- QUESTION – Can members contribute, if they are not crafters? Answer a definite yes!

The project is a charity and would be happy to receive anything that could go into a shoe box that would make a child or younger person happy.

- QUESTION – Do I have to pay the cost of sending the shoebox? Answer. No

WMFVI or local WI groups are bound by charity laws. This means WMFVI and its groups cannot contribute toward any costs from WI funds.

The decision by an individual to donate to this charity either by donating the cost of sending the shoebox or any other donation should be made to the charity directly@ Team4U.com

- Questions – Do you have to contribute A FULL shoebox? Answer a definite NO!

Whilst the charity is happy to receive full boxes they are also happy to receive single items, multiple items, too. Anything that can go into a shoe box is welcome. E.g., a single toy car.

Dates for your Diary

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| 02.11.2022 | Craft Showcase The BMI |
| 22.11.2022 | Cardiff Christmas Outing |
| 03.12.2022 | Carol Service St Martins in the Bullring |
| 24.04.2023 | Spring Outing, Stamford |
| 09.06.2023 | Quiz |
| 21.06.2023 | Summer Outing, Skegness |
| 13.07.2023 | Croquet, Kenilworth |
| 25.07.2023 | Croquet, Kenilworth |
| 19.09.2023 | Autumn Outing, Melton & Oakham |
| Nov 2023 | Christmas Outing, Hyde Park TBC |