

Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes

April 2021

Bee Ambassadors

As we move towards the end of spring and the weather is gradually getting warmer we are all spending more of our time outdoors. For those of us lucky enough to have a garden we are turning our attention towards late flowering spring plants, and summer bedding. But are we choosing our plants with our native bees in mind?

Most of us are aware of the decline of honeybees in the UK due to the ongoing WI campaign SOS Honeybees.



Bee populations remain under threat from a number of forces including habitat loss, climate change, the spread of pests and diseases and pesticide use. Honeybee decline is a major threat not only to biodiversity but to our way of life. As well as making honey, honeybees play an important role in pollinating plants. Around a third of our diet is directly dependent on bees, making them central to our existence.

Since 2009, the WI has teamed up with Friends of the Earth to lobby the government to create an action plan to support honeybees. WI members successfully lobbied their MPs to make sure bees got their fair share of funding for pollinator research. Members also raised awareness in their own communities, by holding Bee Aware action days, pledging to become Bee Ambassadors, and creating their own bee-friendly gardens.

Do you have a bee friendly garden?

We would love to see photos of your bee friendly plants and gardens here at WMFWI, please send them to the media team at wmfwi.media@gmail.com to be featured in The Cog and on our social media pages.

Further reading

For further reading and a list of suggested bee friendly plants see Public Affairs on page 6 where all campaign updates can be found.

National WI Resources

<u>Check out</u> campaign resources launched for World Bee Day 20th May 2021. You will find recipes, gardening tips and short how-to videos.



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

https://www.facebook.com/ WMFWI



200 Club Winner £10

75 – M Ellis, Park Hall WI



Chairman's Address



Hello Everyone,

What a month of varied weather we have had since last I wrote; glorious sunny days mixed with freezing temperatures and snow! A couple of times I was able to work in the garden in shorts and T-shirt and then it has been back to thermals and winter woollies.

This year we decided it was time to update our rather elderly boiler and as luck would have it, the young man arrived to do the work just as the temperature plummeted and we endured three very cold and uncomfortable days without heating or hot water. It took me back to my childhood when we lived by the coal fire with our faces roasting and our backs freezing and the unheated bedrooms meant that it was normal practice to get dressed or undressed as far as possible under the bedclothes. I have not-so-fond memories of stone hot water bottles which kept either one's back or feet warm for a while before, joy of joys, on my eighth birthday my best present was an electric blanket and for a while, before the novelty wore off, I used to go to bed early just to be warm.

Nowadays, my sons (all of whom are in their 40s with the oldest fast approaching his half-century) find it hard to believe that in winter it was not uncommon to have ice on the inside of the bedroom windows and they give me a pitying smile when I wax lyrical about those wonderful Jack Frost patterns on the glass because they have never experienced living in a house with no central heating.

As for my grandchildren, they are absolutely open-mouthed if they ask me for reminiscences and I mention that if you could afford a television there was only one channel in black and white and that did not start with children's programmes till 4.00pm and all programmes finished at 11.00pm with the epilogue and the National Anthem. They cannot envisage life without multiple colour choices and a 24 hour service. How times have changed. When I stop to think about it I find it hard to accept that I was born in the first half of the last century!

Despite the weather, Spring has sprung and with the Easter celebrations and all that chocolate behind us we can start to look forward to meeting in small groups outside. I would love to think that local parks are going to be busy with groups of 6 members dotted about all over the grass enjoying catching up with each other and sharing lock down experiences.



I know some of you have plans to meet as soon as possible so please take photos and send them in so that they can go in the Cog and we can all share in the joy of getting back together.

Please remember to re-join as we don't want to lose anyone. Things can only get better from now on and we can look forward to the continued comradeship of our WI friends.

Lynn

WMFWI News

WMFWI Federation Grant Scheme - 2020 - 2021

The Federation has launched a Grant scheme this year only whereby WIs are invited to apply for a grant of up to £150.00 per WI (maximum)

This grant can be used to offset costs incurred by the WI during lockdown from 1st March 2020 and up to the end of this Financial Year to 31st December 2021 (22 month period)

The grant can be used towards the cost of expenses such as Zoom Licenses, other technologies such as PC, Printer and other consumables, postage and stationery or for Speakers and cost of materials for Craft or other Educational Activities.

WIs may apply for re-imbursement of items already expended since 1st March 2020 up to 31 December 2021.

WIs must apply to the Federation for the Grant and provide details of what the grant has or will be used for. Iris would like to see copies of receipts where possible but we appreciate that the WI will need to retain the original for their files.

Application forms have been sent to all mailing secretaries.

Kim Slivinski, Federation Secretary

Dates for your Diary 2021

27.05.2021	Zoom Workshop – Paper Windmills
08.07.2021	Zoom Talk – Poisons in Literature
19.08.2021	Garden Visit – Ashwood Nurseries
09.09.2021	ACWW Walk – Barston Lake
16.09.2021	Black Country Night Out – The Core
12.10.2021	WMFWI Annual Meeting – Hyatt Hotel
04.12.2021	Carol Service – St Martin's in the Bullring



The 2022 WI Diary is now available to order via your WI cost £5.50

The diary will have a green cover and be entirely recyclable except for the ribbon

Closing date is Tuesday 22nd September 2021

Order now to avoid disappointment!

Over to you

Birds are busy making their nests at present – I daresay you're watching some in your gardens, I know I am. I've felt a bit superstitious about magpies – one for sorrow, two for joy, etc but they re beautiful looking birds and I'll have to forget all of that now!

Next door to me, there's a tall rather straggly conifer and this year, it's being inhabited by a pair of magpies. The one in the photo enters and leaves the nest under the big branch which sticks out just above him and then climbs inside the tree to a nest a metre or so above.



His partner, who's much more careful (would that be the female?!) hops across from the adjoining tree (bottom left) and then hops up from branch to branch, right up the tree. I've only seen quite sturdy sticks taken in for their nest to date and I daresay it's a solid affair.

I was very surprised the other day to see another pair start nest building just a couple of branches above the first pair. My theory is that there's safety in numbers because the site is being weighed up very carefully by a crow which stands on the very top of the tree and menaces them. Crows are known to be aggressive towards magpies whose alarm calls are continuous when the crow's up top.

This sparrow's nest on the other hand is constructed of pliable mainly green stems on the outside and quite fine grasses on the inside. It also has bits of softer material like feathers, dry leaves or sheep's wool and this brings me to a good idea that a member passed on to me. When you're cutting your partner's hair, which I'm sure many of us are, why not put the hair out for the birds to use? I'm told that the smaller birds take it eagerly. I doubt if any of us will come across sheep's wool this nesting season, but it's a good idea to remember and try to collect some off fences or hedgerows next year.



My final request on the subject of the bird nesting season is that all your hedge cutting is done before there's any sign of birds nesting – in other words now!

I know there'll be

complaints, but just think about sitting out in the garden come summer watching the youngsters fledge, keeping company with a friendly robin as we disturb the soil and hearing the joyous sound of birdsong from nearby trees and hedgerows.

Liz Galloway, Kings Norton Afternoon WI

Here are some bracelets I've made using crochet and beads for the two orange and green ones. The salmon pink one is ribbon weaving with beads. All of the other items in the picture are made with the Japanese art of Kumihimo bead weaving, which includes the poppy bracelet, knotted necklace, one with the little popper, green and blue, purple beads and the fluffy one.



Dawn Statham, Victory Belles WI

Aldridge WI 'Garden Girls' have been tending the flower beds on The Croff



you can keep up to date with activities and events on their Facebook page by following at facebook.com/aldridgewi/ Aldridge WI was formed in 2016 and now has in excess of 50 members. They meet on the 4th Thursday of each month and currently have a membership waiting list.

Balsall Heath & Moseley WI

welcomed via zoom
Miss Cherry Bombe (aka
Lindsey, President of Tea N
Tiaras WI in Essex) for a
fabulously funny and heartwarming talk that covered
how she discovered
burlesque, and then the WI,
and brought the two worlds
together.

From empty nest to huge success, and via dance classes and craft sessions, Lindsey took us on a journey that many of us could relate to. Plus costumes and a bit of shimmying!

Lindsey.barrell@aol.co.Uk



Balsall Heath & Moseley meet on the 2nd Sunday of each month follow us at <u>facebook.com/balsallheat</u> <u>hmoseleywi</u>

Public Affairs

The lockdown period has necessitated significant changes to most of our campaigns, but here are some updates on some of them.

5 Minutes that Matter



THAT MATTER

CERVICAL SCREENING
SAVES LIVES

Cervical screening programmes have been impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown period. If you have questions or concerns

about what this means for you, visit Jo's Cervical Cancer Trusts' website for the latest information and to access support and advice

: https://www.jostrust.org.uk/information/coronavirus/fags

Climate Change: How You Can help



Sign up for a "Community Climate
Action" resource pack. This pack has
everything you need to get ready for
COP26, including information about
The Climate Coalition's 'community
declaration.'
Become a WI Climate

#ShowTheLove

Ambassador and subscribe to the Public Affairs Digest by emailing the NFWI Public Affairs Team.

Check out the campaigns which support **climate change action**, for example, End Plastic Soup by recycling and disposing of waste responsibly, even though Charity shops may be at capacity and our local tip is taking no new waste currently. *It's a time to be patient until things improve*.

Food Matters:



Avoid food waste by planning your meals ahead even more important now that we'll want to feel prepared for visitors at short notice.

Have you downloaded the **Top 10 Tips to Reduce Your Household Food Waste?** Every kitchen should have one!
Use this link to help you find recipes to use leftovers.

www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/recipes
There's plenty more on the Food Matters campaign on our WI website.



Why not sign up for your own copy of the Public affairs digest on My WI delivered to your inbox every month! There's much more on all of these topics, including interesting articles, reports and statistics from all over the world on the My WI area of our website www.thewi.org

SOS for Honeybees:

One of the older campaigns now, but a very important one – the bees (and butterflies) are about, lured out by the flowers which came out in



the warm spell. I fear for them in this very cold weather as I do for the birds and must remember to keep topping up the feeders! If you haven't already planted some flowers for pollinators, it's certainly not too late, but don't forget the single flowers are the easiest for them to access. Try primrose, violet, bluebells and aubretia for early pollen; lavender, toadflax, buddleia, verbena, heather for mid-season; French marigold, sedum, Michaelmas daisy or most forms of daisy including sunflowers for late. There are many more. Both fruit bushes and trees and most vegetables are also both a good source of pollen and need pollinating.

World Bee Day 20th May 2021

Food Matters



Not far into the first lockdown, when I was relying on grocery deliveries, I found it impossible to get fresh eggs...so I went online.

The smallest quantity I could order was 4 dozen and so I looked into the possibility of freezing the surplus. Hooray, it was possible but you needed to break them, or if you chose, separate yolk from white. The separating sounded a bit fiddly so I opted for freezing them whole, shelled and lightly whisked as for scrambled egg. This worked absolutely fine as I was using them for quiches, scrambled egg and in baking several months later.

I'll pass on a tip in case it hasn't already occurred to you...think carefully about the container/s you're going to use so that you know how many eggs are in each and can take out the number you require! Maybe you'll freeze them individually in a muffin tin and when they're firm, take them out and put them loose in a large container. I so wish I'd had this conversation before I froze mine! However, you can also tell by weight how many to take out – a large egg weighs approx. 50 grams or 1.75 oz and this is how I now work it out...and I didn't waste a single egg of my 4 dozen.

Sign in to My WI

The dedicated website for all WI members. Here you will find everything you need from essential information and advice for running your WI, to campaign action packs and special interest projects for you to try.

If you have **not registered for My WI yet**, please click the "Register" button and follow the instructions at mywi.thewi.org.uk/

Public Affairs Sub-Committee

Liz Galloway, Margaret John, Nancy Coldwell, and Pamela Griffiths (ACWW)

Although inhibited by the difficulty of meeting and reviewing venues, we are still intending to put on some outings for everyone who is keen to attend as soon as the lockdown is eased.

We've arranged for Dr Kathryn Harkup to give us the talk Poisons in Literature which she would have given at the BMI last year. Having attended a previous talk of hers' organized by Worcestershire Federation, I can assure you it'll be an interesting and innovative experience! This will be a Zoom talk on 08 July. See flyer for details.



Dr. Kathryn Harkup is a chemist with extensive knowledge of poisons and a passion for Agatha Christie's mysteries. She is a freelance science communicator who delivers talks and workshops on the quirky side of science and has published A is for Arsenic, analyzing the poisons used by Agatha Christie in her novels. She's an excellent speaker who involves the audience in the development of her stories and delivers them with a light-hearted humour.

Later in the summer we'll be visiting John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries. It's a visit that we've done before but it was so popular that we've arranged to go again on 19 August.

Over the last twenty years John Massey, with the help of a dedicated team, has been developing this lovely private garden behind Ashwood Nurseries. In 2008, he was honoured with the MBE for his services to charity and in 2010 The Royal Horticultural Society presented him with the Victoria Medal of Honour, the highest honour they can bestow, in recognition of his outstanding services to horticulture.

August will be an ideal time to see all that the garden has to offer.



Competitions

If you enjoy writing, there are 2 chances to get your pens out and enter our annual competitions this spring.

Firstly, you might like to write a piece (no more than 500 words) on the theme 'Let me show you what a woman can do' for the **Lady Denman Cup** in partnership with the National Gallery and the self portrait of St Catherine of Alexandria. Closing date Friday 30th April 2021.

The second competition is the **Valerie Daggatt Cup** presented annually for a piece of writing on the theme this year 'l've found a silver lining in the covid cloud'. Closing date Monday 29th June 2021

Entry forms available from Julie Afridi Martin, 28 Vicarage Road, Yardley B'Ham B33 8PH or on WI Website

In both cases, please send a stamped addressed envelope, completed entry form address slip (available from your secretary), For Valerie Dagatt only a cheque for £5, entries for Lady Denman are free.

For Gardeners there is **The Huxley Cup** WI's are invited to design a planted area that could be recreated within their local Community. The planted area can be designed for any season, themed to reflect the spirit of the WI, local community, or which tells a special story.

Members are encouraged to work together and submit a design (or mood board), no larger than A3, containing a sketched 2D design (birds eye view), a clear explanation behind the design theory, research undertaken during the creation, colour schemes, examples and reasoning behind plants and materials used plus a clear, drawn image of the finished planted area. It is up to the WI to interpret the theme as they wish and decide whether to base their design on a season or theme.

Deadline for entries is FRIDAY 27 AUGUST 2021.

Secretaries have received application details

If you are crafty you can enter the **Montgomerie Shield** outgoing Chairman Iris Montgomery has kindly donated a shield to the federation trophy cabinet. An annual competition will be held for Best in Craft to be awarded at the Federation Annual Meeting each year.

2021 members are invited to design and make A Thistle

Using any media: knitted, quilted, embroidered, painted, beaded, sculpted etc (excluding photographic) A4 size.

Closing date is Friday 3rd September 2021

Prizes will be awarded on 12th October 2021

Liz

Crafts

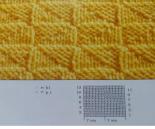
PROJECT LINUS !K



There 3 are sizes blankets/quilts that the project need, they are: - baby, approx. 36" square, child: - approx. 45" x 60", and teen: - 50" x 72". You need to use 100% acrylic yarn, please no wool because some children are allergic to wool and acrylic is easily washable. If you wish to create patchwork blankets, 100% cotton is to be used, they must be lined and all bindings to have no raw edges. This information is taken from projectlinusuk.org.uk

Knitted Block of the Month

Mirrored Triangle Stitch



This can be worked over a multiple of seven stitches.

Row 1: *K6, p1*, repeat from *to*.

Row 2: *K2, p5*, rep from *to*.

Rows 3 and 4: *K4, p3* repeat from *to*.

Row 5: repeat row 2. Row 6: repeat row 1.

Row 7: *P1, k6* rep from

to.

Row 8: *P5, k2* rep from *to*

to.

Rows 9 and 10: *P3, k4* rep from *to*.

Row 11: Repeat row 8. Row 12: repeat Row 7. These 12 rows form the pattern.

Pattern taken from The Big Book of Knitting Patterns. Pub: Sterling Publishing Co

Crochet Block of the Month

A variation on a square, in either 1, 2 or 3 colours, as always, use a DK yarn and size 3.5mm hook, the pattern is going to be written for one colour only, this block has been taken from 200 crochet blocks, by Jan Eaton. It is called Square Target.



Foundation ring: work 4ch and join with slip stitch (ss) to form a ring.

Round 1: 5ch (counts as 1tr, 2ch), [3tr into ring,2ch] 3 times, 2tr into ring, join with ss into 3rd of 5ch. (four groups of 3tr, four 2ch spaces forming corners). **Round 2:** Ss into 2ch sp, 7ch

(counts as 1tr, 4ch) *2tr into same 2ch sp, 1 tr into each tr across each side of square. **2tr into next 2ch sp, 4ch;rep from *twice and from * to **again, 1tr into last 2ch sp, join with ss to 3rd ch of 7ch, (four groups of 7tr, four ch spaces forming corners)

Round 3: in 4ch sp, 7ch (counts as 1tr, 4ch), *2tr into same 4ch sp, 1tr into each tr across side of square, **2tr into next 4 ch sp, 4ch rep from * twice and from * to

**again, 1tr into last 4ch sp, join with ss to 3rd of 7ch. (four groups of tr, four 4ch spaces forming corners). Round 4: Repeat round 3 (four groups of 15tr, 4 ch spaces forming corners).

Round 5: Repeat round 3 (four groups of 19tr, 4 ch spaces forming corners).

Round 6: Repeat round 3 (four groups of 23tr, 4 ch spaces forming corners).

Round 7: 1ch, 1dc into each tr in previous round, working [2dc, 1ch, 2dc] into each 4ch corner sp. Join with ss into first dc.

Round 8: 1ch, 1dc into each dc in previous round, working 2ch at each corner, join with ss into first dc. Fasten off yarn.

Coffee and Craft Zoom Chat

Last month, the Federation hosted our first Coffee, Chat and Craft Zoom meeting. Twenty members got together, and we had a lovely time sharing our 'lockdown' makes and projects, these ranged from 'stained glass' patchwork, fancy masks, knitting, crochet, freestyle machine embroidery and so on. The articles in this month's article are based on requests from those who were at the meeting.

So, let us make a start. It is good to see that you are making use of the knitted and crochet blocks, which are being incorporated into the Project Linus blankets. During our Zoom catch up it was decided to have a workshop on Zoom, the request was made that we do a non-textile craft.

Zoom Workshop: May 27th, 2021 at 10:30am

As summer will soon be upon us, I have decided to demonstrate and make paper windmills. Once you have learned to manipulate the paper, you can then develop the idea and make brooches. This workshop is for WMFWI members only.



Materials and Equipment for the workshop

You will need the following: -

Craft paper size 8cm or 10cm square. Paper scissors, button(s), garden cane or barbeque skewer, sticky foam pads or double-sided tape.

For a brooch you will need, felt or cotton fabric size, safety pin or brooch, button(s) or beads, needle, and thread. Meeting details below.

Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j /86781091164?pwd=Nmth bVB2N2hiZGJkMEdLT3V WZ1FSZz09

Meeting ID: 867 8109 1164 Passcode: 434502

I hope to be able to repeat this workshop as an evening event possibly in late June.

Debbie Arkinstall

Entertainment

The entertainment committee are planning a federation visit to The Core Theatre in Solihull on 16th September 2021

BRIAN YEATES ASSOCIATES PRESENTS

A BLACK COUNTRY NIGHT OUT

A BLACK COUNTRY NIGHT OUT 2021

DANDY - OLLIE SPENCER - VIVO - JOE THOMAS - EMMA ROLLASON as 'Dolly Allen'

Everyone loves a great variety show....just look at Britain's Got Talent. Well here is a show that is bursting at the seams with talent! Not only that but it is full of variety... comedy, music and even a tribute or two!

Tickets cost £20 each available from Julie Afridi-Martin

Live at The Barbican Paul Weller takes to the stage for his first live gig in two years, with the backing of the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a performance curated and arranged by the multi-talented Jules Buckley. Tracking his 50 year career and including new songs.



Watch online Saturday 15th May 8pm - tickets cost £12.50

<u>barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2021/event/paul-weller-jules-buckley-bbc-so-live-from-the-barbican</u>

Discover museums and galleries online

Online exhibitions. Virtual Tours. Fascinating films. Explore ways to engage with museums in the digital space.

artfund.org/whats-on/museums-online

Denman at Home – Mistresses and their Houses Tutor - John Vigar

Many of our monarchs have had love interests outside of their (often arranged) marriage. This course looks at lovers as varied as the Duke of Buckingham, Nell Gwynne and Daisy Countess of Warwick and looks at the history of their houses as well as the part they played in our national history. Not for the faint-hearted.

Thursday, 06 May 2021 at 7:30-8.30pm Cost: £5

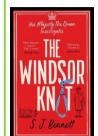
<u>denman.org.uk/whats-on/lifestyle-courses/online-course-johns-talk-on-mistresses-and-their-houses-2021-05-06-193000/</u>

View the Wildlife Photographer of the year images from current and previous years competitions at the Natural History Museum.

https://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/exhibitions/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year.html



Locked into Reading



The Windsor Knot by S.J. Bennett Genre - Cosy crime

In this book the Queen is shocked to discover that one of her guests has been murdered, after an event at Windsor Castle.

The Queen has been leading a double life since her coronation and has the knack of

solving crimes. She now sets out with the help of one of her staff to solve the mystery and clear the names of her servants.

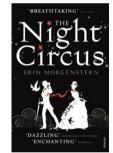
This book features Prince Philip and the dialogue between them is fantastic. the portrayal of the Queen and how she knows she is perceived by others as just an elderly lady, which is far from the reality of how sharp a mind she has and a steely determination to solve this crime.

I loved this book and found it hugely enjoyable
This is the 1st book in the series and the second is due out
later in the year. Sue Laws, Walsall Wood WI

The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern Genre – fantasy

Described by a member as weird, wonderful, and undefinable.

The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents



Is an utterly unique experience full of breath-taking amazements. It is called Le Cirque des Rêves, and it is only open at night. But behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway—a duel between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose by their mercurial instructors.

Unbeknownst to them, this is a game in which only one can be left standing, and the circus is but the stage for a remarkable battle of imagination and will.

Yasmin Samaraweera, Yardley WI

We would love you to give us your own reviews. (no more than 10 lines please – 200 words) We hope to publish 2 reviews each month.

Do you have a recommendation for a good read?

If you do please send them to us together with the title, genre. writer and a short summary of what the book is about.

Puzzle Page

Say what you see

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April

WORDSEARCH

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Bee, Beer Garden, Blossom, Breeze, Bright, Bulbs, Daisies, Dandelions, Friends, Frogspawn, Leaves, Light, New, Gardenias, Grass, Peonies, Pond, Rain, Shoots, Showers, Six, Toad,

Tree, Walking, Warmer,

Answers in May Newsletter!

True or False

General Knowledge

- Roger Federer has won the most Wimbledon titles of any player
- 2. An octopus has five hearts
- 3. Mr Birdseye was the inventor of frozen foods
- 4. A baby has more bones than an adult
- 5. Goldfish only have a memory of three seconds
- 6. The highest mountain in England is Ben Nevis
- 7. A shark can blink its eyes
- 8. There are five different blood groups
- 9. An Olympic Gold medal is made of solid silver
- 10. Pigs cannot look up at the sky

March Puzzle Page Answers

Say what you see

Back Soon, Out of Touch, Nail in the Coffin, Odds and Ends, Bucket List, Short Straw, Broken Promise, Pound of Flesh, Shut up Shop, Doctor in the House, Beauty Sleep, Forgive and Forget, Magic Circle, Pie in the Sky, Divide and Conquer, Tickled Pink.

Riddle me this

1.Two feet, sheep have hooves, dogs have paws, 2. They both need bailing out, 3. Bed, 4. Outside, 5. None the others were frightened away, 6. They are all boys

We want to hear from you. Send us your WI news, photographs, stories, events, and activities. Contact the Media Team at WMFWI.media@gmail.com

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