



West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes Cog in the Tree

December 2020

Bumper Christmas Edition

Our Christmas Card to You

The Board of Trustees would like to wish all West Midlands Members a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Traditionally there has been no newsletter for the month of December but with the current situation we felt it important to keep in touch, and to share some of our favourite Christmas makes, bakes, and shakes.

Trustees have provided recipes for Christmas food and drinks, crafts, and quizzes.

We have gathered many members makes and announcements together in the Over to You section, and look forward to seeing what you send in to us next.

We hope you enjoy reading this bumper extra edition and hopefully find something to inspire you, or to ignite a little Christmas spirit in these trying times.



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

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



Best wishes WMFWI Trustees

200 Club Winner £10

38 - B Rogers, Silhill WI

Chairman's Address



Hello all WI members, According to the carol, 'Tis the season to be jolly' but we are going to have to work extra hard this year for any semblance of Christmas cheer. I have 'decked the halls' though not with boughs of holly, and since we will be having no family gatherings I have only used a few of the usual decorations, merely enough to lighten our spirits.

In normal times my Christmas starts on Christmas Eve when we invite friends and neighbours to come and sing carols round our piano with mulled wine, hot sausage rolls and mince pies to keep their strength up. When the whole family gathers (there are 13 of us round the dining table for a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, presents and lots of games before the 5 grandchildren (age range 7-11) are packed off to bed and the adults can relax.



It's amazing how common sense goes out the window at anything to do with Father Christmas. Last year, I convinced the children that he had left me a letter claiming that he had dropped off all his presents and had decided to relax in Grandma's jacuzzi bath but the naughty elves had hidden all his clothes and he needed the children to find them so that Grandma could post them back to him! He'd left a list of all his belongings, including a pile of reindeer droppings that Rudolph had accidentally left behind (actually chocolate coated nuts and raisins!) Cue a merry half-hour while the children scampered round the house looking for Santa's boots and clothes and the droppings which had been artfully hidden. In the meantime, the adults gathered in the kitchen (where else when you are trying to produce a complicated meal?) to start with a Christmas drink and scoff my cheese straws. You will find the recipe for them on page 10.

Sadly, there will be no such goings-on this year but the whole family, including the children, has decided that it will be better to have Christmas via Zoom this year if it means that we can all be safely together next year.

You will all have been asked to remember to make your resolution choice and send it to your Secretary and as an extra chore this year you have been asked to approve the amendments to the Constitution to allow for meetings and votes to be taken via electronic or postal means or even postponed if necessary in times of unprecedented difficulties such as has happened this year. If you are in agreement with these changes then I would suggest that you do nothing further and only contact your Secretary if you have any concerns. Your Secretary then can pass any concerns on to me to be forwarded for consideration by NFWI before the proposed amendments are sent to the Charity commission for ratification. I am happy to agree to the amendments but hope that we never have occasion in future to need to call them into play. If you do have any concerns and want to discuss them, you are welcome to contact me and I will do my best to help.

Back to seasonal matters and I hope that you are all able to stay safe and well over the Christmas period and to have as happy a time as you possibly can.

I shall raise a glass of something sparkling to all members on Christmas morning.

Lynn

Lynn's Christmas Quiz

Carols: These are the last lines of carols. Can you give the first line?

- 1 On Christmas Day in the morning
- 2 And fit us for Heaven to live with Thee there
- 3 And a Happy New Year
- 4 O tidings of comfort and joy
- 5 Glory to the new born king
- 6 Darling, darling little man
- 7 Christ the Lord
- 8 Guide us to Thy perfect light
- 9 Sweet singing in the choir
- 10 Gloria, Hosanna in Excelsis

Contact Lynn Smith at 50 Station Road, Kings Norton B30 1DA 0121 694 4201 Lynnsmith@blueyonder.co.uk

Lynn's Christmas Quiz Cont.

Christmas:

- 1 Who wrote 'A Christmas Carol'?
- 2 What is the horticultural name of the Christmas rose?
- 3 In which ocean is Christmas Island?
- 4 Which composer wrote a Christmas Cantata?
- 5 What type of tree stands in Trafalgar Square at Christmas?
- 6 Which singer made 'I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas' popular?
- 7 What is a pomander usually made from?
- 8 What is the origin of Boxing Day?
- 9 What are the names of the Three Kings?
- 10 How many presents in total did 'My True Love send to me'?

Anagrams:

The following are all anagrams of words connected with Christmas. Can you unscramble them?

- 1)NNRTMOAE
- 2)YCBAERNRR CEUSA
- 3)EEITSLOM
- 4)ATINS HLSIOANSC
- 5)TICEEANMM
- 6)KHTRUIS GDITHLE
- 7)EEEMNNLIC
- 8)IEEYUDLT
- 9)YTTAIINV
- 10)WFHLTTE GINHT



Valerie Daggart Winning Story

We were just in time! The church bells were already ringing down as we pushed open the heavy church door. A warm hand was offered in greeting and the Church Warden presented us with a small candle in a dish. A voice whispered, "Please stay behind afterwards for mince pies, mulled wine and a chat". The tenor bell gave a final "ding-dong" as we found that the only two empty seats in the candle lit nave were behind a pillar! The silence was broken by some tittering and shuffling from the vestry. Then a spotlight shone on a solitary, fully robed choirboy, walking along the aisle to the top of the chancel steps. The organ gave a little beep as the choirboy turned to face the congregation. The spacious, lofty church was suddenly filled by the pure unaccompanied treble voice of the young choirboy as he sang the first verse of the carol "Once in Royal David's City".

My heart missed a beat and I nearly gasped out loud when I realised who the choirboy was. Bill was grinning like a Cheshire cat. He squeezed my hand. No parents could have felt more proud of their child than we did. It wasn't just our lad's voice that was thrilling but the fact that he had the courage to stand alone and sing to the packed church, watched by the Mayor and civic dignitaries who were seated in the front rows. We had no idea that he was going to be the soloist at the carol service. Recently we had moved into the ancient town where new friends and neighbours had made us very welcome.

I recalled how devastating it was to be called a failure when I didn't pass a school exam at eleven. I knew that our son's confidence had been utterly shattered when he had had exactly the same experience. So while his Dad was grinning, I was quietly purring and offering a silent but heartfelt prayer of thanks. For me, this was the best Christmas present a mother could ever receive – a strong, healthy and happy child, confidently facing the future!

The choir and Clergy processed to their stall in the Chancel and our voices joined theirs in joyous praise as we sang some of the carols and Christmas songs that we had known all our lives. Our throats, parched by our efforts, were glad of lubrication by the deliciously spicy mulled wine. Everyone chatted happily, shaking hands and introducing themselves. Even the Mayor, who had met Bill at meetings of the Speakers Club, came forward, "Please come and meet my wife. She is a member of the town's Women's Institute and she has a spare ticket for their Christmas party in the Town Hall next week. She would be delighted if you came as her guest and perhaps, if you are interested, become a member of the WI!"

When the church door opened, a blast of icy air reminded us

that, in spite of the warmth and convivial atmosphere inside, we would be glad to be wearing our winter garb as we walked home. What a beautiful sight met our gaze as we stepped outside and ventured into the chilly air! It was appropriate that we had been singing "In the bleak midwinter", for while we had been at the Carol Service there had been a light flurry of snow. Now the sky was cloudless and the churchyard was scintillating and sparkling in starlight, moonlight and streetlight. At the top of the church spire the golden weathercock glistened, while high above him, the stars of the Milky Way twinkled and twinkled and twinkled. There was hardly a pinprick between them. It was a glorious sight! I gave a deep sigh and thought of the gravelly voice of the singer on my favourite CD, "What a wonderful world" he sang. I had no doubts. It is indeed a wonderful world!

As we trudged up the hill towards home, I began to dream of toasting my toes by a warm fire while enjoying a bowl of hot soup. Then I remembered the electric blankets I had bought as Christmas presents. Last night our hot water bottle leaked! Wouldn't it be lovely to snuggle down into a nice warm comfortable bed? Would it matter if we had our presents a little early? Perhaps Father Christmas had some small things in his sack that we could have on Christmas morning. I was startled out of my reverie by the sound of running footsteps behind us and a familiar voice panted out "Hey! Mum! Dad! Wait for me!"

Our son had given us one of the most memorable evenings of our lives. But, as well as music, he has another love in his life, Football! Will his new football boots fit him and help him score goals? He tells me that as goalie he doesn't try to score goals! (Mums are ignorant, but they excel at washing the team's muddy football shorts and shirts!)

Christmastide will be very special as we all gather together in our new home to celebrate by eating, drinking and making merry (if we haven't dozed off!).

Sounds of the Salvation Army band float through the air. Along the street doors and windows open wide as everyone joins in singing "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" followed by "God rest ye merry, Gentlemen".

Neighbours share plates of delicious cakes, mince pies, sausage rolls and bottles of homemade wine. Life is good!

Indoors, tomorrow's feast is prepared, presents wrapped, stockings filled and the tree decorated. Every year, a mince pie and a glass of Bill's favourite sherry are left out for Father Christmas. We never hear sleigh bells or footsteps, but both pie and sherry have always disappeared by morning. Bill is always delighted to help Father Christmas!

Gentle young arms give me a hug. "Sit down Mum, I'll make you a cuppa" says our choirboy son.

Happy Christmas, Everyone – **Dorothy Shaw, Knowle WI**

Over to You

Berkswell WI began a series of zoom demonstrations and talks. The first two being member lead. We have been very inspired in the Cog to see what other members across the West Midlands have been doing and have started to lay something on for our members each month.



This is a Christmas wreath in the rag rug style, very easy to do! Thirteen ladies attended and we felt that was a good start.

Our November demonstration is showing how to make paper roses for Christmas



We would love our friends across the West Midlands to join us for our new year zoom at 2.30pm on Wednesday January 20th. Please ring me for details of how to get onto the zoom link. Hope to see you then and wishing you a peaceful Christmas from all at **Berkswell WI, Jayne Maxwell** President 0121 705 2670

Silhill WI

A Christmas Plea from those In Peril in the Sea

It is hard to believe that a beautiful card, holds a menace so deadly to me.

Its picture is pretty, the words full of love, but the glitter's the problem you see.

Made of plastic they are, and like too many things, they will mostly end up in the ocean.

Microplastics are tiny, but sadly they can, transform to a dangerous potion.

Large plastics entangle, we cannot break free, small plastics are deadlier still.

We ingest the poison, and that makes us sick, and also, they frequently kill.

Have a wonderful Christmas, but try to be sure, to avoid shiny plastic this year.

We wish you good fortune – say thanks to you all, who make sure that we don't disappear.

Silhill WI, Ann Dixon – Climate Ambassador



Over to You Continued

Harborne Village WI now meet monthly in a virtual format, via a Zoom link. For October we booked a demonstration on how to make a willow wreath.



Members were invited to pre-book their willow pack and collect it in advance of the meeting.



It was great fun, we had 32 members join us for the demonstration. Some wreaths were then decorated.



**Harbourne Village WI,
Lynda Gibbon**

Balsall Heath & Moseley WI

have been decorating their tree for the **Moseley Park and Pool Christmas Tree Trail** today, with lots of brilliant handcrafted and upcycled decorations made by their members.



There were lots more trees were being worked on too, it's going to be great! Open to visitors from 2nd December.



Balsall Heath & Moseley WI, Jen Barrow

Silhill WI member Rosemary Bird made this Christmas Stocking for a neighbour expecting a new baby, hence the question mark. Usually the child's name goes at the top. Rosemary has already made one for each of her five grandchildren



Silhill WI, Heather Lewis

A few of my Christmas makes. All made in beadwork.



All items in the christmas room are made from beadwork the fire in the fireplace even lights up.

Victory Belles WI, Dawn Statham



Newton WI Melanie Wisher has been making a family of teddy bears complete with outfits to help pass the time during lockdown.

Newton WI, Melanie Wisher

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



A Climate Conscious Christmas? ... a topical reminder!

Have you planned to do just a little more than last year to address climate change issues?

Starting with **food**, we all want to make Christmas special, even if we're enjoying a tin of corned beef or a nut roast garnished with a sprig of holly! I daresay, like me, you all struggle not to overprovide, so food waste will be on our minds. A freezer is a boon in that leftovers can be frozen promptly and used at a later date, and there are many recipes for leftovers on the web, and in Christmas editions of magazines, including WI Life. I'm planning to make the turkey and cranberry pies on page 47 of WI Life. I hope I end up with some leftover turkey!

But first, there's the **buying**, and I hope you'll all buy local produce, unwrapped if feasible, and use your judgement where 'sell by' dates have been advised by the supermarkets. One supermarket I know sells 'wonky' veg and these are quite cheap but also great because you often get far more for your money.

Prince Charles is urging us to **plant trees** and of course it's an excellent idea but my garden isn't quite as large as his! If you don't have too much space, don't despair, shrubs and climbers also contribute, basically anything with leaves. Climbers for example, clematis or even the dreaded Virginia Creeper (*I wouldn't recommend planting this!*) can cover a vast area along a wall. Hedges, shrubs, patio tubs or fruit bushes also achieve useful benefits of carbon exchange.

Christmas trees are a debating issue: mine's artificial and about 25 years old – its served time! And is clearly not 'single-use' plastic! - but if buying a fresh one, try to buy it locally and ensure its grown locally to avoid adding fuel miles. It's a time to think about conserving natural resources ... power, water, natural materials and the like and avoiding waste which can harm wildlife and the environment, often ending up in the oceans.

16 days of action against violence to women ended on 10th December. NFWI sent out a request to all members to hold a candlelit vigil on the 9th of December. Please send us photos if you took part in the event.

NO MORE
violence against women

Decorations, why not make your own - my grandchildren have produced some beautiful ones in school and nursery? Try to avoid buying plastic baubles or glitter laden decorations, glitter dusted Christmas cards and paper – ditto foil wrap. So many clothes and accessories nowadays, particularly for children, use plastic based 'bling' but there are usually equally appealing alternatives.

We're only human and although we try, I daresay we won't get it all right, but for the sake of our children and grandchildren's future, let's do our best this Christmas!

I wish you all a very happy, **Climate Conscious Christmas!**

Liz Galloway, Chair Public Affairs, Climate Ambassador

Resolutions

I hope that by now you have all read the information available about the resolutions and have put some thought to ONE that you will be voting for.

When you have chosen the resolution you wish to support please ensure that you send your voting slip to your secretary, alternatively you can contact your secretary to register your vote either by email or telephone. The final date for registering your vote is Monday 18th January 2021.

With the festive season fast approaching I know that you will have lots going on but if you could just spare five minutes to read the resolutions and send in your vote you will have helped to make a difference.

**Cathryn Marsh,
Resolutions Officer**

Get Involved

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.'

Members who would like to be more formally involved in the WI's environmental campaigns may wish to consider getting involved with the [WI's Climate Ambassador scheme](#).

Keep up to date on our climate campaigns by subscribing to the Public Affairs Digest at <https://www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns>

The Public Affairs team has created a monthly e-update on all the latest WI campaigning news.

Don't forget February will soon be upon us. How will your WI **#showthelove**

Your Show the Love 2021 Resource Guide is ready!



As in previous years, Show the Love 2021 will be our annual celebration of everything we care about and want to protect from the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

From the [results of the NFWI's lockdown survey](#), it's clear that more and more people have discovered the restorative power of natural world over the last few months.

Whilst Show the Love 2021 celebrations are likely to look a bit different, there are still plenty of activities that you; your household; your neighbours; your Climate Ambassador networks; and WIs could do to take action to protect the people and places you love from climate change.

The guide contains a number of ways that you could show the love in your community including instructions on how to create your own green heart pom-pom, advice on how to create your own green heart window display, and suggestions of organising a 'community knowledge exchange' with another local climate or environmental group.

It also contains some top tips on how to talk to your MP about climate change, a COP26 factfile, and a postcard that you can send to your MP letting them know you have signed up to The Climate Coalition's Declaration and letting them know about the various ways they can show support for vital climate action in 2021.

More information on other potential awareness-raising activities and craft projects will be available on the Show the Love website run by The Climate Coalition over the coming weeks.

How to get your resource guide



Due to the logistical challenges posed by COVID-19 and the NFWI Public Affairs team working from home, we would like to encourage members to request digital copies of the Show the Love resource guides.

However, for members who would have difficulty using a digital Show the Love resource guide, the NFWI will have a very limited number of physical copies of the Green Heart Action Pack available.

To request your Show the Love resource guide, please complete the resource request form available on MyWI through the below link.

The form also includes an option for you to request additional stickers and postcards to support your Show the Love plans.

<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/public-affairs-and-campaigns/current-campaigns/climate-change/show-the-love-2021-request-a-resource-guide>

Let NFWI Public Affairs team know your Show the Love plans!

As ever, do let us know about your Show the Love plans.



Whether they're similar to how you celebrated last year or whether they look completely different, we'd love to hear what your plans look like and whether or not the NFWI Public Affairs team could support them in any way.

Email the Public Affairs team at pa@nfwl.org.uk

Crafts

The Trustees Challenge for 2021 is for Project Linus. We have supported this Charity several times in the past. For new readers, Project Linus provides blankets for children and teenagers who stay in hospital for any amount of time. I know that quite a few institutes support this project and ... please carry on.

Project Linus (named after Linus in the Peanuts cartoon strip) would like patchwork style blankets, sewn, knitted or crocheted. To get you started, I've included a knitted square pattern and some useful books, which have ideas/designs in them.

I will be promoting a square/block of the month for the next few months.

This month is a basic garter stitch block.

Next months block will be a mitred square ... and patchwork blocks.

**Debbie Arkinstall,
Crafts Chair**

PROJECT LINUS UK

Project Linus UK is a volunteer organisation. We aim to provide a sense of security and comfort to sick and traumatised babies, children and teenagers through the provision of new home made patchwork quilts and knitted blankets, and give volunteers across the UK the opportunity to contribute to their local community.

We deliver around 3,500 quilts and blankets to sick, and disadvantaged children across the UK each month. We cannot reach out to every child, but we can let them know that someone cares, along with the physical reassurance that comes with being snuggled up in a quilt. We always try to deliver quilts and blankets to children who are local to the makers.

Blanket Block of the Month

Garter Stitch Square Pattern

Using DK yarn, cast on 2sts, knit 1 row. **Next row.** K1, inc 1, next row and every row; k1, inc 1 k to end of row. Continue until you reach your desired size (approx. 42sts). **Next row** and every row; k1, k2tog, knit to end of row, continue until there are 3sts left on needle, k1, k2 tog, cast off. This makes a stable square.

If you have craft items for collection contact Debbie Arkinstall 0121 382 7401 email arkinstall.mama@outlook.com alternatively drop offs can be made to Country markets by prior arrangement.

Montgomery Shield

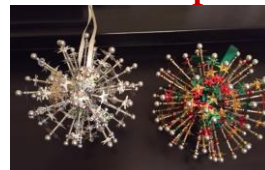
The outgoing Chairman Iris Montgomery has kindly donated a shield to the federation trophy cabinet. An annual competition will be held for Best in Craft to be awarded at the Federation Annual Meeting each year.



2021 members are invited to design and make A Thistle

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

Jackie Gregory's Christmas Sputnik



You will need One "Bounce Ball" from Hobbycraft, 80 (approx.) 65mm Corsage Pins from www.smithersoasis.com, Ribbon 38cm in your choice of colour, Seed Beads size 8-20 grams, Embellishing Beads, Bugle Beads and sequins.

Method Tie the ribbon around the bounce ball leaving a loop to hang the sputnik and with about 15cm spare at the tail ends, secure ends with pins as you go. Thread 10-12 seed beads, bugle beads and embellishing beads onto corsage pins, always end with a sequin as these will cover the bounce ball surface. Insert embellished pins into bounce ball until the base is covered.

Lynn Smith, Chairman

Useful Books

200 Crochet Blocks by Jan Eaton

75 Knitted Floral Blocks by Lesley Stanfield

The Big Book of Knitting Stitch Patterns.

Denman at Home

If you have access to the internet you can participate in dozens of courses, demos, craft-alongs, and talks via zoom.

Visit Denman website for details. www.denman.org.uk

Trustees Trophy 2020 – Table Runner

Closing date has been extended until 31st January. Judging will take place during February

Winners will be informed by post and receive postal certificates as we cannot meet to pass out awards.



A Knitted Christmas Pudding



You will need oddments of brown, white, green and red DK yarn and a pair of 3.25 mm needles.

Cast on 30sts and work as follows:

Row 1, knit. **Row 2**, K1, inc. 1, repeat to end of row (45sts), **Row 3**, purl. **Row 4**; k1, inc. 1,(k10, inc1) 3 times, k6 – 49sts.

Rows 5 to 13, starting with a purl row, work 9 rows in stocking stitch.

Row 14; k2 in brown, (k2 in cream, k5 in brown) 6 times, k2 in cream, k3 in brown. **Row 15**; P3 in brown (P2 in cream, P5 in brown) six times, P2 in cream, P2 in brown. **Row 16**; K1 in brown, (K4 in cream, K 3 in brown) 6 times, k4 in cream, k2 in brown. **Row 17**; P2 in brown, (P4 in cream, P3 in brown) 6 times, P4 in cream, P1 in brown. **Row 18**; (k 6 in cream, K1 in brown) 7 times. **Row 19**; (P1 in brown, P 6 in cream) 7 times. **Row 20 and 21**, in cream, starting with a K row, work 2 rows in stocking stitch. **Row 22**; K 2, k2 tog to last stitch, K1(37 sts) **Row 23**, Purl, **Row 24**; K1, k2 tog to last stitch, K1(25 sts) **Row 25**; purl. **Row 26**; K2 tog (13 sts)

Cut yarn leaving a long thread, thread yarn through remaining sts and pull tight and secure. Sew up seam and you can either use as a chocolate orange cover or stuff and make into a bauble.

Holly Leaves – make 2. Using green yarn, cast on 17sts. **Row 1** knit, **row 2** purl, **row 3** K1, yf, k 2 tog to end of row, **row 4**, purl, **row 5** knit, cast off knitwise. Fold each leaf in half, sew cast on and cast-off edges tog, attach leaves to pudding.

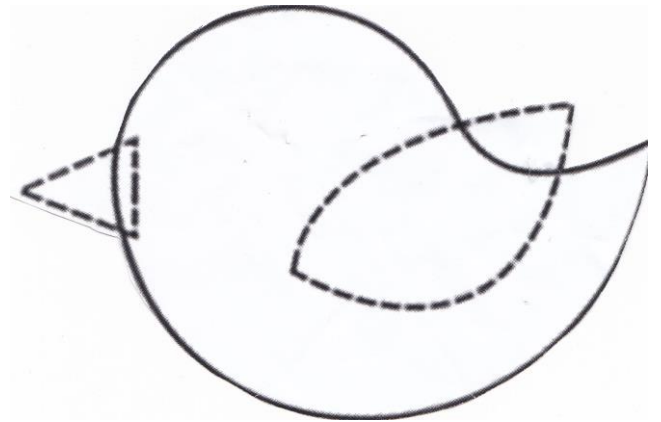
For berries sew on red buttons or mini pom poms.

Debbie Arkinstall, Crafts Chair

Kim's Christmas Robin

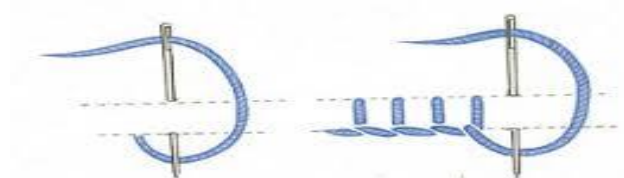


You will need oddments of felt in red for breast, grey or brown for body and, black or yellow for beak. Ribbon for hanging. Thread. Wadding. Sequins to decorate.



Cut 2 body pieces in brown or grey. Cut 1 breast piece in red. Cut 1 beak in black or yellow.

Attach red breast to one of the body pieces using blanket stitch.



Join both body pieces together using a blanket stitch. Sandwich the beak and hanging ribbon in place as you go, stuff with wadding before closing fully. Stitch an eye. Decorate with sequins.



Kim Slivinski, Federation Secretary

Lynn's cheese straws recipe



Ingredients:

4oz plain flour
good dash of cayenne pepper
2oz whipped up cooking fat (I use Trex)
1 beaten egg
3oz grated strong cheddar cheese
1 tablespoon water

Method:

Sieve flour and cayenne pepper together (add salt if you like), rub in the fat until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs, stir in the grated cheese and bind together with the egg and water to form a firm dough. Roll out and cut into strips as fat or thin as you like (I cut mine about 2 fingers width) and bake in a hot oven for 10 minutes. They will keep for a couple of days in an airtight box but my family love them straight out of the oven as an accompaniment to their favourite drink.

Lynn Smith



Liz's Salmon Risotto

Recipe for Christmas Leftovers: Serves 2

Ingredients:

2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 shallots, finely chopped; clove of garlic, chopped
2 fillets (8 oz / 225 gms or equivalent) cooked salmon, flaked
8 oz / 225 gms asparagus, cut into short pieces
8 oz / 225 gms Arborio (risotto) rice
1 pint / 500 ml vegetable (or chicken) broth
4 oz / 110 gms grated fresh Parmesan cheese
lemon juice and/or zest, to taste



Method:

Sauté shallot until soft in olive oil. Add garlic (if using) and cook gently for a few minutes, then add rice and cook, stirring, for another few minutes.

Briefly cook asparagus (3 - 4 mins) in boiling water and drain, reserving asparagus and water.

Start to add asparagus water to rice, a little at a time (when used up, continue adding broth), allowing rice time to absorb the liquid as it cooks. Stir frequently to avoid sticking.

When the rice is nearly cooked, but still has 'bite', gently stir in the flaked salmon with the final addition of liquid and let it just heat through.

Add asparagus and parmesan at the end, stirring through, and finish with a sprinkling of lemon zest, a squeeze of lemon juice, and some cracked black pepper.

Note: this is an excellent way of using up leftover salmon or even smoked salmon. Try adding half a glass of white wine to liven it up! Try it with samphire or with broccoli instead of asparagus. Many other options exist, e.g. turkey, ham or chicken and mushroom.

Liz Galloway

Cathryn's Stollen Mince Pies



Ingredients:

Shortcrust pastry
homemade or bought
Jar of mincemeat

Stollen topping:

50g madeira cake
50g ground almonds
25g caster sugar
50g butter
1 egg yolk
3 tbsp candied peel
100g marzipan finely chopped or grated
25g flaked almonds

Oven temperature:
200 C or 180 C fan oven

Method:

Blitz in a food processor the cake, ground almond, sugar, butter, and egg yolk into a smooth mixture.

Put into a bowl with the peel and marzipan and mix well.

Roll out the shortcrust pastry and cut into circles to line the patty tins.

Fill each one with mincemeat and top each with about two tsp of the mixture and sprinkle with the flaked almonds.

Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden brown.

Cathryn Marsh

Iris's Cumberland Rum Butter

Ingredients:

225g/1 cup/8oz Butter at room temperature
225g/1 cup/8oz soft light brown sugar
90ml/6tbsp dark rum or to taste

Makes about a 1lb



Method:

Beat the butter and sugar until soft, creamy and pale

In colour. Gradually add the rum, almost drop by drop

Beating to incorporate each addition before adding more. If you are too hasty adding rum it will curdle. When all the rum has been added spoon the mixture into a covered container, and chill for 1 hour.

The butter will keep well in the fridge for up to four weeks.

Variation

A variety of liqueurs can be added to the butter and sugar, to make alternatives.

Try the recipe with orange or brandy flavoured liqueur.

Iris Montgomery

Kim's Mulled Wine



Ingredients:

To serve 3-4 (sensible people), you will need:

A bottle of inexpensive dry red wine
2 sticks of Cinnamon
2 Star anise (I managed to get these off ebay!)
4 Cloves
250g of caster sugar
Juice of a clementine or satsuma
Juice of half an orange
Rind of the orange and clementine, finely grated

Method:

Simmer the citrus rind, juice, and sugar until a you get a citrus caramel.

Add the wine and the spices and continue simmering (do not boil)

After about 10 minutes, transfer into a slow cooker and simmer on the lowest setting for about an hour.

Strain and serve in heat-proof glasses.

To store, just keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for about three days – although I have never managed to save any of mine!

Kim Slivinski

Claire's Christmas Cocktails

Citrus Christmas surprise

Ingredients:

40 ml Cointreau, 10 ml fresh lime juice, 50 ml fresh clementine juice, 40 ml sparkling water

Method:

Fill a glass with ice, add the Cointreau, fresh lime juice and clementine juice. Then top it off with sparkling water and stir briefly. Garnish with fresh cranberries.



Mulled Sloe Gin & Apple

Ingredients:

50ml sloe gin
150ml apple juice
50-100ml freshly squeezed orange juice to taste
1 tsp cranberry jelly (optional)
Cinnamon stick

Any additional festive spices of your choice: try star anise, cloves or cardamom pods

Orange slices and/or fresh cranberries, to garnish



Method:

Add the juices, jelly, and spices to a pan, then heat gently - stirring occasionally - for a few minutes, until the jelly has dissolved. Remove from the heat, strain into your drinking glass, then top up with sloe gin. Garnish with a slice of orange and/or a few fresh cranberries; you can also pop a fresh star anise or cinnamon stick in, for added flavour.

Claire Woodland

A Room Where None Had Been

Deep inside a stable, a mouse observed a scene.
Carefully he noted, new room where none had been.

A rustle and a bustle, above his tiny head.
A writhing and a squirming, lay in a manger bed.

The hues of tire worn garments, weak torn through every knot.
Swaddled, tightly binding, the rocking new made cot.

The flames of silent flicker, threw shadows cross the place.
Loving contemplations, shared from face to face.

A lamb or two and keepers, down on knees bent low.
Stable door ajar, above, an astral glow.

Gifts placed meekly on dried covered golden floor.
Scented bottles spilt, cross cushioned piled straw.

Glistened water droplets, the steaming livestock share.
Velvet capes and golden heads, cast down in purpose there.

A hurry and a scurry, flash lights from all around.
Quick change the focus to, pure sacred music sound.

A trumpet in the distance, a shard of light in space.
Lit up veiled image, defined a gentle grace.

Deep inside the stable, a mouse observed the scene.
Peace, good will to all, from a room where none had been.

Julie Afridi-Martin



Our Wondrous King



Mary is with child you know
but her and Joseph they must go.

To Bethlehem to be counted
So the little donkey Mary mounted.

In Bethlehem there was no room.
Have Mary and Joseph met their doom.

A stable is all they can find.
But Mary and Joseph don't really mind.

For Mary's child is on its way.
To change the world, so the angel did say
Mary and Joseph don't know the behaviour
Of Jesus their son, who will be our saviour

Three wise men travelled from afar
Guided by a big bright star.
Frankincense, gold, and myrrh they bring

Bestowing them upon the tiny King
The shepherds out in the pasture
Find their way to their new born master

The Angel Gabrielle told them so

Of the place they must go
We all bow down to Christ the babe
For God sent him our world to save

As sinners just like you and me
He will forgive us and set us free

If we believe in him today
Then he will show us to live the right way
For Christmas isn't about presents and things
But about the birth of our Wondrous King

Michelle Dimmock, Hawne WI

Entertainment

Unfortunately, I am unable to proceed with bookings for the proposed visit to see HMS Pinafore at Buxton Opera House in August of next year as the musical company have not confirmed their availability for the performance.

This outing is now cancelled until further notice.

I need your help;

As you know I have just taken over the job of organising events and trips with the Entertainment Committee. I would like to hear from members. Please tell us the types of events you would like us to put on in the future.

As we are in lockdown once more it's an ideal time to reflect on ways forward to meet the needs and ideas of all our members and to start to do the groundwork. For this to happen we need YOUR Ideas!

Please email me jtafridi@hotmail.co.uk or

phone me 0121 784 7010 you can also drop me a line at 28 Vicarage Road, Yardley B33 8PH

Julie Afridi Martin – Chair of Entertainment

Dates for your Diary 2021

09.03.2021	WMFWI Annual Business Meeting
19.04.2021	NFWI Annual Meeting - Royal Albert Hall
04.06.2021	Federation Quiz – Shirley Community Centre
29.06.2021	Birthday Tea – Birmingham Botanical Gardens
08.07.2021	Poisons in Literature – BMI
19.08.2021	John's Garden Visit – Ashwood Nurseries
09.09.2021	ACWW Walk – Barston Lake
21.09.2021	Let's Get Digital Workshop - BMI
12.10.2021	WMFWI Annual Meeting – Carr's Lane

ACWW Pennies for Friendship

The Associated Country Women of the World is an International Organisation that pursues its charitable objectives through its member societies, individual members, and networks. Together, we represent more than 9 million women in more than 80 countries around the world. We do this through advocacy, partnership, sharing knowledge and local activities. This includes using our Consultative Status with the UN and its Agencies to represent rural women, facilitate better access to better information resources, funding community development projects and training programmes.

What is Pennies for Friendship?

Pennies for Friendship is the general fund of ACWW. It enables us to maintain the office and staff, where we host Board and Committee Meetings, and keep an extensive archive. Pennies for Friendship also allows us to facilitate the network that connects women across the globe. We produce awareness raising material, advocate for rural women at the United Nations, and our Area Presidents carry extensive work all over the world.

The Idea

The idea was simple: every member, and member of member societies would give one small coin in addition to their membership payment. This led to the establishment of the Million Members Campaign – as ACWW grew, so would the funds which are – needed to maintain this great organisation.

Donations

Pennies for friendship donations are now due from all WI's who take part. Cheques are payable to:

ACWW PfF Mrs Pamela Griffiths Clinton Barn, 2A Clinton Lane, Kenilworth CV8 1AT

200 Club

Reminder that all 200 Club applications for 2021 need to be sent in as soon as possible.

Shares cost £5 each.

Please write your name, address, and WI branch on a slip of paper stating how many shares you would like. Send together with a cheque made payable to WMFWI and remember to include a stamped addressed envelope.

You have to be in it to win it! Remember the more shares sold the bigger the payouts.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and hopefully a good New Year.

Iris Montgomery, Federation Treasurer.



Puzzle Page

Answers in January Newsletter!

Say what you see

Thing=Thing Thing=Thing Thing=Thing	THUMB ?	STEP → STEP ← STEP ←	9 2 7 4 SAFE 3 1 5 6
READ		RAKEN	M I M I ? I N ? N D D
G N LOST I LOST K LOST A LOST M	MAN BOARD	TOUCH	ECONOMY
OVATION	AID ← AID AID	TRY <u>STAND</u> 2	VIOLET

Christmas Cracker

Why did the little boy bury his torch?

What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?

What begins with an P ends with an E and has thousands of letters in it?

What has to be broken before you can use it?

What has many teeth but cannot bite?

What runs around the yard but never moves?

What has one head, one foot, and four legs?

When is a door not a door?

When does Friday come before Thursday?

The more you take away, the bigger I become, what am I?

Give me air and I will live, give me water and I will die, what am I?

Christmas Wordsearch

E	R	P	U	P	I	N	G	N	I	D	D	U	P
I	U	G	E	E	R	T	S	N	O	W	A	T	Y
P	D	I	E	R	B	B	R	A	N	D	Y	I	U
E	O	D	M	W	K	V	E	O	O	N	A	N	L
C	L	S	A	N	G	E	L	O	J	F	E	S	E
N	P	G	O	O	S	E	T	O	I	E	L	E	E
I	H	R	I	B	B	O	N	Y	N	S	D	L	E
M	T	Y	I	C	C	O	A	L	G	T	N	S	D
I	P	S	E	L	B	U	A	B	L	I	A	T	I
N	A	T	I	N	S	E	N	V	E	V	C	F	S
C	R	Y	E	K	R	U	T	G	G	E	D	I	E
C	T	F	H	G	I	E	L	S	L	L	N	G	R
T	Y	O	A	T	N	A	S	L	O	R	A	C	I
Y	T	I	V	I	T	A	N	Y	O	J	C	Y	F
S	E	L	C	I	C	I	E	K	A	C	A	A	C

ANGEL FESTIVE NATIVITY TINSEL
 ANTLERS FIRESIDE PARTY TREE
 BAUBLES GIFTS PUDDING TURKEY
 BRANDY GOOSE RIBBON YULE
 CAKE ICICLES RUDOLPH
 CANDLE JINGLE SANTA
 CAROLS JOY SLEIGH
 COAL MINCE PIE SNOW

November Puzzle Page Answers

Say what you see

I Understand, Crossroad, Tricycle, All Around, Top of the Class, Rose between two Thorns, Peace on Earth, Two Wrongs don't make a Right, Age before Beauty, 1 in a Million, North Pole, Double Cross, Mr Right, Top Dog, Square Meal, You're Under Arrest.

Riddle me this

Heroine, ICU, Teapot, Time, Match, Tongue

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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