

Newsletter

August 2026



Autumn Lunch 2026

21st October from 12 noon for 12.30 pm until 4 pm
At Oakdale Golf Club, Harrogate, HG1 2LN
£35 for members, £40 for non-members
includes 2 course lunch
Booking form is with your Secretary or on our website



Federation Quiz 2026

**Come and test your knowledge
and have fun!**

Quiz heats are on

Friday 18th September from 6.30pm

for a prompt start at 7.00pm

with the final on 16th October

Teams of 6 (max 2 teams per WI)

A light supper and

refreshments are included.

Booking form is with your Secretary
or on the website.

Cost per member is £10

Presidents & Secretaries Forum

On 22nd August

From 10am to 1pm

At Gargrave Village Hall

Free to members

Come and meet other WI members



Chair's Notes

by Hazel Smyth web.nwyorkswi@yahoo.co.uk

Telephone 07495 362525



July is always a busy month for NYWFI and this year to test us all we had the Barnard Castle Residential weekend AND the Great Yorkshire Show Exhibition and Cafe.

I want to say a massive thank you to the teams behind both events for their vision and execution. As I write this we are very busy with the accounting for both; paying tutors, speakers and suppliers.

But the greatest thanks are due to you - our members, who have supported with both time and talents. THANK YOU!

Hazel, NYWFI Chair.

Membership Team Update

by Sue Earl Armstrong sueearlarmwiadviser@gmail.com



Presidents and Secretaries Forum

Just a reminder that we are holding a Presidents and Secretaries Forum at Gargrave Village Hall on Saturday 22nd August from 10.30am to 1pm. We encourage officers or potential new officers to attend as we are there to give you ideas and you also have the opportunity to chat with fellow officers. Forums are free to WIs and are held several times throughout the year, covering the roles of Treasurers, MCS Reps, Presidents and Secretaries. We aim to offer forums at different venues and not just at Alma House as the 71 WIs in our Federation span a large area within North Yorkshire. We would love to see you, so please get in touch with the office to book your place. Light refreshments will be available.

Officer Roles

To run a successful WI we highly recommend that you have a change of officers every 3 to 4 years. This helps bring a fresh approach to your WI and allows officers to have time for themselves and their family. It is a good idea to have someone shadow you for a year before taking on the role. It really does help to give your WI that lift and you a break, so please think about this for your WI's sake.

Memorial Book

In the last newsletter I mentioned the Memorial Book and in response to this we have had several replies. If you would like to have something entered in the Memorial Book, can you please contact Helen in the office at Alma House. Any related donation will be used to provide bursaries awarded at Spring Council for members to attend Federation Events or Workshops.

Thank you from the Membership Team

Activities Update

by Sara Baldwin-Cole sarabaldwincole@outlook.com



Happy August to everyone! I hope you will enjoy any holidays or breaks that you may have...which brings me on to our Barnard Castle Residential Weekend break! 47 ladies found their way to the great location of Barnard Castle Boarding School on Friday afternoon and brought the sun with them!

Everyone received a personalised programme with all their selected activities on it as well as a tote bag that reminded them that we were being adventurous! There are mini write ups of most of the activities from the various attendees but just to give you a picture of our endeavours:

We started with a supper and evening talk by Mark Gregory about his impressive work at Chelsea Flower Show, and a few bubbles were consumed too! Saturday morning saw early morning swims, a type of Tai Chi on the lawn in the shade, and three types of craft activity: felt flowers, crepe paper craft and botanic soap making – so popular we are offering it as an Alma workshop in October. After lunch there were river walks, a mooch around the historic features of Barnard Castle town or African Drumming and Sound Bathing. Then there was a Vodka tasting experience from a local Potato based vodka company followed by a toe tapping musical performance. Some ladies even took advantage of the enormous HD television in the sixth form common room to watch the footie!

Sunday saw more craft activities involving macrame, botanic wire craft and some experimental printing and the weekend was finished off with a visit to the Vivien Westwood exhibition at the Bowes museum next door to the school...and yes we did attack the VW dressing up box!

The feedback has been very positive, ladies who came alone felt included as part of a group, friends were made, lots of laughter heard, lots learnt, and yes we will plan another version of this weekend in the future....watch this space!!! We cannot thank enough the welcome that we received from the school staff, which made every detail of our weekend so enjoyable.

Willow Weaving Workshop 25th June at Alma House

This was something I always wanted to have a go at as did 9 other ladies. The day started with Rachel the tutor telling us about the many different willow we were to use and by the end of the day we would know all about 'tips, butts, upsets, rapping irons, wale weaving, clumping' and why did we need 12 laundry pegs? Time would tell.

We all started off with rope weaving on the base of the board and the 'upsett' (first 2inch of the sides), then had to make a decision. Was it to be Double French Randing weave or Rope weave using 3 rods two over one under or one over one under depending on the weave chosen. Rachel guided us through our chosen weave.

To complete our baskets we added a leather handle, after we rounded the ends and punched holes and brass riveted it into position. We all went home proud of our achievements and a basket we could use. What for was yet to be decided.

And yes we did need all 12 laundry pegs, used to hold the side rims in place while weaving the final row.

Thank you Rachel and the WI for a great workshop and to Janet our hostess for keeping us hydrated on one of the hottest days.

Caroline Barker, Harrogate Library WI



BOTANIC SOAP MAKING WORKSHOP



With Rachel Hutton from
Hedgerow Hare



**TUESDAY 27TH
OR WEDNESDAY
28TH OCTOBER
10.30 TO 3.30PM**

ALMA HOUSE

£45 Members

£50 non-members

(This course by Rachel is £79 at RHS Harlow Carr)

All materials included

Enjoy a day of Natural Soapmaking

**Learn how to make a variety of cold process soaps
using natural ingredients.**

**Lots of hands-on activity in a friendly fun environment.
You will create a selection of soaps using fresh fruit, nuts,
vegetables, herbal & beverage infusions
for a variety of uses.**

**Perfect for Christmas Presents and they will store for over a year.
MAXIMUM 10 PER CLASS**

**Please note you will need to be able to stand for periods whilst making and
have a good level of manual dexterity. A wipe clean apron is required and no
open toe shoes allowed please.**

**Refreshments on arrival at 10am,
Bring a packed lunch.**

**Booking starts 1st August and closes 16th October
Please state preferred date. Booking Code: 26A14Soap**

SAVE THE DATE!

OUR ANNUAL CRAFT
DABBLE DAY

WILL BE ON

THURSDAY 5TH NOVEMBER

AT GARGRAVE VILLAGE HALL

SELECT TWO CRAFTS TO TRY FROM A SELECTION OF FOUR.

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED, DETAILS TO FOLLOW, BOOKING WILL START 1ST SEPTEMBER

September 16th - WI Day

September is the WI Promotion Month

Look out for promotions in the press.

What can your WI do to promote membership?

Remember if a member joins in October they will only pay 6 months subscription to gain the benefit of attending meetings throughout the autumn and winter.

Promotional materials are available from myWI

<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/Publicising-your-WI/resources-and-guidance/creating-promotional-material>



Around the WIs

Nidd Valley Group Event

Nidd Valley Group is a group of four WI's (Bilton, Birstwith, Hampsthwaite, Killinghall) from the north side of Harrogate. We organise 5 events over the year that all the members can attend. The programme looks like this: April-lunch/annual meeting, June-local walk/supper, August -competition time at the Ripley Show, October-quiz and then in December – carol service. Each WI takes it in turns to host an event. Our June walk on a dry, summer's evening was wonderfully hosted by Bilton WI and 39 ladies attended. We enjoyed a lovely, local walk led by Maureen Jessop and then headed back to the community hall to share a super picnic tea and the chance to catch up with our friends.

Heather Hart, Killinghall WI



The Three B's WI

We hosted a social evening to celebrate our 10-year anniversary in June. The evening was enjoyed by many members, where there was a pie and pea supper and a homemade cake. We held a raffle with special prizes, a quiz which was themed around the number 10 and 2016, and also played an ice-breaker game in which members wrote down a fact about themselves, and we guessed who it was- this went down very well with members, learning all sorts about each other- our members have lived rich and fascinating lives!

There was a wonderful display of pictures from outings, speakers and different times we've met up as a WI which was great to look at. It was a wonderful evening had by all, finished off with a toast and glass of fizz! The Three B's also enjoyed a trip to the Himalayan Gardens near Ripon in May, despite the cold wind. It was a lovely trip where we saw the plants, flowers and contemporary sculptures.

Jen Firth.





Ripon Belles WI

For our summer outing, in July 19 of our members visited Mallard Grange Farm, near Ripon for an evening tour of this very special and individual farming business. The farm is just past the Fountains Abbey entrance on the Pateley Bridge road. Here you can find the wild flower field which is open throughout the high summer for PYO and summer events. The flowers looked like little jewels sparkling in the evening sunshine. We parked our cars in an adjacent field and met James Johnson, the farmer who was our host and guide.

James and his father Charles have farmed here, and on a neighbouring farm for many years. Recently, they have actively pursued a regenerative approach to managing their land and livestock. Because attention is now focused on letting the pasture grow with minimum mechanical processes and additives, even after only a few years this nature first approach is producing significant environmental benefits and having a positive impact on both farms, the range of wild flowers, meadow land and subsequent increased quality of beef, lamb and eggs.

James was so passionate about how he is now farming. He even dug out a spadeful of grass land so we could feel, smell and see the root system which is now developing deeper into the soil and creating better underground highways for pasture above ground to thrive. This in turn is grazed by the beef cattle who are moved every 12 hours to the next strip of grass. The cattle who feed on this pasture need less in manufactured products to maintain their health as it's all there in the root system. The chickens also follow to take their turn to graze on the land that has fed the cattle. After 12 hours of being cattle grazed there is still plenty left in the seeds and soil to provide them with plentiful free space and nutrition. We humans can then purchase pasture raised eggs through The Egg Club which does home delivery in and around Ripon. I don't think I was the only Belle who didn't know the difference between free range and pasture raised eggs. I certainly do now!

We had a hugely informative and entertaining evening and can thoroughly recommend Mallard Grange Farm for a WI visit. James enjoys getting his message out there and was pleased to answer all of our questions.

Kathy Donnelly





Kirby Hill WI

This is the 5th year that Kirby Hill WI has gone to Ripon Races Ladies Day and the day is much enjoyed by all the ladies that attend. So far we have ways been lucky with the weather and this year, nobody won much money but it's fun trying! We dress in our posh frocks and hats and have a nice meal in the restaurant before placing our bets and studying the horses in the paddock before each race.

On a sad note our previous organiser Margaret Wilkinson passed away suddenly last year but we raised a glass to her and will continue with what has become an annual event in our calendar, as she would have wanted.

Maureen Murphy



West End theatre star entertains Cononley WI

They say it takes a village to raise a child - well, Cononley WI members were bursting with pride when our very own Luke Bayer came back "home" to entertain us all for President's Evening! Luke was born in the village and educated at the local primary and secondary schools. Many of our members have been closely following his career - from playing lead in various local productions as a young child, to being runner up in the X Factor at the tender age of just 14. He went on to star in major musicals mainly in London's West End and Manchester - including Les Miserables, Rent, Hair, Chicago - and more recently playing Jamie in Everybody's Talking about Jamie and Jack in Titanique. The whole village watched him perform on BBC's Children In Need and as Jack with the cast from Titanique on Strictly!

Despite being in the middle of rehearsals for the upcoming High School Musical (Luke is starring alongside Jason Donovan) and moving house the day after visiting us - he royally entertained us - reminiscing about growing up in the village, his journey via X Factor with his mum as chaperone (his Mum Linda, is a Cononley WI member) and singing a whole medley of songs - WOW! What a voice!

We simply had the best of evenings and it will go down in the history books of Cononley WI. Goodness knows how we can top that for next year's President's Evening! A WI Trip to see Luke in High School Musical is definitely on the cards though!

Julie Cawood

Julie Cawood (President) and Elaine Shoesmith (Treasurer & Secretary) with Luke





Follifoot WI

This month Follifoot WI returned to the 70's, the decade of blockbusters, disco and punk! In 'Captive on the Carousel of Time' our guest speaker, Malcolm Johnson, retired teacher and University of the Third Age Lecturer, took us back through each year of the decade with a cleverly chosen number one hit on which to hang its history.

Using Edwin Starrs 'War' in 1970, The Strawbs 'I'm a Union Man' 1973 to the Sex Pistols 'God Save the Queen' 1977 and the Bee Gees 'Saturday Night Fever' 1978, Malcom talked us through the main political and social events of that decade both here in Britain and around the world.

His themes were serious, wars, terrorism and famine, unrest in Britain, double dip recessions, fuel shortages and three-day weeks, as well as fun, and Malcolm was great fun! Turned out in his 1970's purple wedding suit with matching block heeled shoes he certainly looked the part and even pogo'd to the Sex Pistols sound track.

Malcolm reminded us of the games we played, Mastermind, Connect 4 and Guess Who and the first computer video games too, who remembers Space Invaders? Movies we queued to see, including Jaws, Saturday Night Fever and Star Wars and the clothes we would have been wearing, or not! Because, of course, the 70's were the decade of 'The Streak', Ray Stevens 1974, and the newspaper pictures illustrating just how handy a policeman's helmet could be!

The phenomenon that was David Bowie had his only No 1 of the decade in 1975 with 'Space Oddity', Abba won their first Eurovision Song Contest in 1974 with 'Money, Money, Money' and Britain it's third in 1976 with Brotherhood of Man. It was indeed a decade of great music.

On the women's front, the first Women's Lib conference was held in the 70's, Virginia Wade won Wimbledon in 1977, the Queen celebrated her Silver Jubilee the same year, and the decade ended with the 1979 hit by Ian Drury & The Blockheads 'Reasons To be Cheerful' as Margaret Thatcher walked through the doors of No 10. Thank you, Malcom, that was the best history lesson ever!

Jan Mackaness.



Bedale Belles WI

Our outing this year was a Day At the Races. It was a lovely day when we all met up at Catterick Race Course. We received our race cards and headed to the Horseshoe Café Bar, which is situated by the parade ring. We were booked in for lunch before the races started. Whilst we were enjoying lunch we were all studying the race cards.

After a lot of banter with the bookies about how we "bet", choices were made. Unfortunately the first race was a loss to all. As we got more confident in our choice of horses, whether it be the name of the horse, colour of the jockey's outfit or the look of the horse, we ventured into betting "each way" and upping our stakes! After getting the hang of the way of betting, we all came away at the end of the day with more than we started with! A thoroughly enjoyable mini Ascot for us.

Jane Beck





NOTICEBOARD



Barnard Castle Weekend and Great Yorkshire Show

In September there will be a special supplement showcasing both these events - please submit any articles or photos no later than 12th August.

Climate change affects everyone!

Ripon Belles WI is hosting a screening of a short film entitled 'The People's Emergency Briefing' at Alma House on September 9th.

The film features leading UK experts in climate science, food security, health, economics, national security and nature. It presents a clear, measured view of how the climate and nature crisis is affecting everyday life. Further details, including how to book for this free event, are with your secretary.

Around the WIs

We've recently found ourselves inundated with articles for inclusion in the newsletter which is great news! As a result we now ask that you limit them to a maximum of 300 words. Send in your photographs and articles to the office via email to nywfw24@gmail.com. Please note that due to space limitations some articles may be edited or may only appear on the website.



With effect from 1 September 2026 the Federation mileage expenses rate will increase from 40p per mile to 45p per mile.



Puzzle Corner

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

The words to find this month are all WI themed

Summer
Pimms
BBQ
Friends
Yorkshire
Walks
Gladiolus
Music

Thanks to Lizzie Richards of
KO Girls WI for this wordsearch

NYWFWI EVENTS AT A GLANCE

EVENT	DETAILS	BOOKING CLOSES
Presidents & Secretaries Forum 22/08/2026 - 10am to 1 pm	Gargrave Village Hall Free to WI members	14/08/2026
Climate Change Presentation 09/09/2026 - 7pm to 9 pm	Alma House - Free to all WI members	31/08/2026
Federation Quiz Heats 18/09/2026 6.30 pm for prompt start at 7 pm	Various venues - see your secretary for details	2/09/2026
Federation Quiz Final 16/10/2026	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
Autumn Lunch 21/10/2026 12 noon for 12.30 pm	Oakdale Golf Club, Harrogate	7/10/2026
Soap Making Workshops 27/10/26 or 28/10/26 10.30am to 3.30 pm	Alma House	16/10/2026
Dabble Day 5/11/2026 10am to 3.30pm	Gargrave Village Hall	Details to follow in September newsletter
Food & Flowers 18/11/2026 10am to 3.45 pm	Darley Memorial Hall	6/11/26
Carol Service 2/12/2026	Holy Trinity Church, Skipton	Details to follow in September newsletter

For Events and Activities (workshops, speakers, trips etc) organised by our Federation, we have always had a no refunds policy for any cancellations to a booking, requested by the attendee. This policy can be reviewed in the light of an exceptional circumstances reason for a cancellation, and if a place is arranged to be taken by another WI member, then that would allow us to revoke the policy also.

If the event is cancelled by Federation then full refunds are of course offered and cheques used for payment will be destroyed or returned.

Thank You

WINNERS OF 200 CLUB DRAW

Congratulations to the winners of the July draw.

- 1 - Sue Butters, Sharow WI - £30
112 - Eileen Chester, Skelton on Ure WI - £20
122 - Marton cum Grafton WI - £10

The Federation Treasurer will be in touch about your prize



**If members have any safeguarding issues, please contact
Hazel Smyth on 07495 362525**

Office closure dates

Helen, Federation Secretary, will be on holiday from 24th to 28th August so the office will be **closed** that week.

During this period please ring Hazel on 07495 362525 for any urgent matters



Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/nywfw>



North Yorkshire West Federation has a new Instagram account
[https:// www.instagram.com/northyorkshirewestfederationwi/?g=5](https://www.instagram.com/northyorkshirewestfederationwi/?g=5)

Office Opening Times

Tuesday 9.00am-12.30pm, 1.00pm-4.00pm,
Thursday 9.30am-12.30pm, 1.00pm-4.00pm,
Friday 9.00am—12.30pm, 1.00pm—3.30pm.

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