



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes
Autumn Edition 2021 (September and October)

Chairman's Address

Hello everyone,

I am writing this in the middle of August and I think summer has gone away on holiday leaving us with cool, cloudy weather with the constant threat of rain. Although I am not a fan of very hot weather, I do like sunshine so I hope that we get a return of summer style days before autumn appears.



Last time I wrote I said I was going up to Llandudno for a few days and the weather then was proper English seaside holiday sunshine. I made it up to the top of the Great Orme for the first time and enjoyed a great game of crazy golf there. The first 9 holes were reasonably easy but the next 9 were quite challenging and hole 13 took me 25 attempts before I gave up, picked my ball up and moved on to hole 14 so that the family following could have a go. I'm glad to say that they also found it really tricky!



Whilst in Wales I went across to Anglesey and made time (of course) to visit the first ever WI meeting place in Britain at Llanfair PG. The original hut has been smartened up as you will see from my photo but it is good to know that it still exists after 100+ years and is still used as the local WI's venue.

I know that some of you have been managing to meet during the summer in gardens and parks and I hope that everyone will be happy to resume meetings in September.

It will be so good to get back to normal and enjoy being with friends again without the restrictions that admittedly have helped to keep us safe over the past 18 months but which now feel like intrusions into our lives. I am still wearing a mask on public transport and in shops but otherwise I am beginning to feel relaxed about meeting people both out and indoors.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and look forward to a grand WI reunion in September.



Lynn



200 Club Winner £10

J Jones, Solihull WI



Don't forget to follow us on
Facebook.

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

Green Lane WI



I would like to share with you all some of the lovely things that our “crafty ladies” at Green Lane WI have made during the pandemic.

These include the bags for Beads of Courage, then they challenged each other to decorate a card & also to decorate a plain gift tag.

One lady, Jean Mandefield who isolated with her family in London made “scrubs” for two London hospitals St George’s Tooting & King’s Hospital Dulwich where her family members work. Imagine their delight when watching television one evening & they saw medical staff wearing her “scrubs”. Jean made over 120 masks & hats.

Well done ladies!

Lynne Sayers, President Green Lane WI



Photo above shows the doctors actually wearing the scrubs



Dates for your Diary 2021

23.09.2021	Zoom talk (7pm) Author in our Midst, Geraldine Wall, KNA WI
25.09.2021	Skittles – King George Memorial Hall
08.10.2021	Everybody’s talking about Jamie – The Grand
12.10.2021	WMFWI Annual Meeting – Hyatt Hotel
21.10.2021	***change of date *** Black Country Night Out - Core
02.12.2021	Worcester Christmas Fayre
04.12.2021	Carol Service – St Martin’s in the Bullring

Mere Green WI

Our group is large and has been unable to meet at our usual venue since the church hall has remained closed throughout the pandemic.

We had a meet up in the open air in Sutton Park, and were surprised that we were sharing the field with a herd of cows who seemed very interested in the goings on of the WI!



Article & Photos by Daniele Piotet



Solihull Evening WI

Solihull Evening WI members enjoyed a 'Together Again' evening on 21st July back in Solihull Methodist Church Hall, our first meeting since lockdown began, to which 11 out of the 20 members who renewed membership this year were able to come along. We all enjoyed a lovely evening catching up with cupcakes and a cuppa, and so that everyone could have more space than in the room where we usually meet, we were able to use the large hall which we trimmed up a bit with bunting and a few balloons!



We send best wishes to all the other WIs in the Federation enjoying seeing each other again after such a long time.

Kind Regards

Yvonne Stevenson, Solihull Evening WI

Knowle WI say thank you to NHS

Photo of Knowle WI enjoying the sunshine in July and supporting NHS and other front-line workers

Stephanie Withers,
Knowle WI



Heart of England WI

Gill Wiley, one of our long-standing members has recently died.

She had been in St Katherine's Care Home at Temple Balsall in recent years. She was the member who designed the Cog in the Tree logo for West Midlands federation, and was an extremely accomplished embroiderer and seamstress and a member of the Home Economics (as it was then) sub-Committee.



She will be very much missed by members of Heart of England WI, and was a stalwart of the Institute, attending regularly.

We recently made the decision to enter Balsall Common's Annual Scarecrow competition, the theme being 'Our Superhero'. Who better than Sir David Attenborough we thought, with a Climate Change theme? This would tie in nicely with the WI's own Climate Change campaign!

We situated him in a member's front garden where he could easily be seen by passers-by. The display included some knitted 'cupcakes' and a 'bee' display together with camouflage netting and lots of suitable cuddly animals.

Judging took place, and our WI entry won!! This gained us some much-needed publicity for the WI and for Climate Change!



Photo and articles from
Kathryn Shayler (Heart of England WI)

Barston WI

Barston WI had their Centenary in March 2021, and held a luncheon at St Swithin's House in the village on July 7th to celebrate. The lunch was attended by members past and present, and by Lynn Smith Federation Chair.

Founded by Mrs Fitter from the village in March 1921, who was a stock man's wife, the first President was Mrs Strong, who also came from a family of farm workers in the village. There were six members originally, and they met in the Barston Memorial Institute, where we still meet today.



Photograph of those who attended the lunch, pictured in the lovely garden at St Swithin's House and the celebration cake made by member Joyce Naylor.

Article and Photos provided by Deborah Kirkham, President, Barston WI

Jackie Gregory, Dickens & Foreshaw Heath WI has kindly shared one of her favourite poems with us from an unknown Author about the beauty of our planet earth.

Natural



If you listen very carefully,
The ocean will play you a song.
If you relax and set yourself free,
Your spirit will dance along.
If you watch with love and patience,
The sky will paint pictures for you.
If you find the strength to be humble,
You will always be shown the truth.
If you believe in the life this world gave you
And you feel the strength of the earth,
You will come to see
That these gifts are all free
And this planet was not made for its worth.
If you feel a gentle sunrise,
You will see that it touches your heart,
A depth of beauty that cannot be seen,
For the truth and reality are worlds apart.
If you listen very carefully,
You will hear the earth as she cries.
She loves you and gives you all you should need,
And without your love,
She will die.



The Craft Page.



Welcome to September's Craft Page. All around us Autumn tints are appearing on the trees and soon thoughts will be turning to Christmas!

By now, most WI's will have restarted and perhaps all your crafters are starting up your craft groups, or perhaps you managed to keep them going over the past year?

Institute competitions will be starting as well and thanks to Quinton WI, here is an idea for a simple institute craft or competition



Savings Jar

This is a lovely simple activity that could be done during your meeting. You need a small jar with a screw top lid, any form of decoration, this one uses paper and a printed WI logo. You can find a copy of the logo at: - [My WI | Home \(thewi.org.uk\)](http://MyWI|Home(thewi.org.uk)) and there is a section all about using the WI logo.

National Granny Square Day.

August 15th this year was National Granny Square day, and the internet was awash with some very creative Granny squares! I have to admit that my favourite this year was 'Flora' by Lucy of Attic24 fame. If you would like to see a selection of Granny squares, then have a look at 'Simply Crotchet'. Granny Squares are one of the building blocks of making crotchet blankets, jackets, bags and much more. Once you have mastered it then you can try out different stitches etc, but to get you started, here is a basic Granny Square Pattern and a variation.

Traditional Granny



The image is just part of a blanket that I have made using the traditional granny square, as you can see there are plenty of opportunities for playing around with colour and using up oddments of yarn from your stash!

Pattern: - I am going to do a pattern for 5 colours (A, B, C, D and E), but you can use one colour or as many as you like! Double knitting yarn and either a size 3.5mm or 4mm crotchet hook.

Foundation Ring: Using yarn A, work 6 chain(ch) and join with a slip stitch (ss) to form a ring.

Round 1: 3ch (*counts as 1tr*), 2 tr into ring, 1ch, *3tr into ring, 1ch; rep from * twice more, join with a ss into 3rd of 3ch. Break off yarn.

Round 2: Join yarn B to any 1ch space, 3ch (*counts as 1 tr*), [2tr, 1ch, 3tr] into same space (*corner made*), *[3tr, 1ch, 3tr] into next ch space, rep from * twice more, join with ss into 3rd of 3ch, break off yarn.

Round 3: Join yarn C to any 1ch corner space, 3ch (*counts as 1tr*), [2tr, 1ch, 3tr] into same space (*corner made*), *[3tr, 1ch, 3tr] into 1ch space, 1ch, **[3tr, 1ch, 3tr] into next 1ch corner space; rep from * twice and from *to** once again, join with ss into 3rd of 3ch. Break off yarn C

Round 4: Join yarn D to any 1ch corner space, 3ch (*counts as 1tr*), [2tr, 1ch, 3tr] into same space (*corner made*), *1ch, 3tr into each 1ch space alongside of square, 1ch, **[3tr, 1ch, 3tr] into next 1ch corner space; rep from * twice and from *to** once again, join with ss into 3rd of 3ch. Break off yarn D.

Round 5: Join yarn E to any 1ch corner space, 3ch (*counts as 1tr*), [2tr, 1ch, 3tr] into same space (*corner made*), *1ch, 3tr into each 1ch space alongside of square, 1ch, **[3tr, 1ch, 3tr] into next 1ch corner space; rep from * twice and from *to** once again, join with ss into 3rd of 3ch. Break off yarn E.

The Craft Page 2.



Corner Granny



Make the first 4 rounds as for traditional granny square,

Round 5: 1ch, 1dc (double crochet) into every tr and 1ch sp of previous round working 2dc, 1ch 2dc into each corner. Break off yarn.

Change from working in rounds to working in rows

Row 1: Join yarn to any 1ch corner space, with right side of square facing and working through back loops of each stitch on **this row only**, 1ch, 1dc into each dc along first side of square, 3dc into next 1ch corner space, 1dc into each dc along next side of square working last dc into corner 1ch space, turn.

Row 2: Working through both loops of each stitch 1ch, 1dc into each dc of previous row, working 3dc into the centre st of 3dc corner group, turn.

Repeat row 2, nine times more.

You can make your Granny Squares as small or as large as you want, and if you use up your oddments of yarn, you will end up with a lovely Scrappy Yarn blanket, which are very fashionable and eco-friendly at the moment!

The pattern is taken from **200 Crochet Blocks** for blankets, throws and afghans by Jan Eaton pub: David and Charles. If you want to explore more, you can get this book – preloved from anything from 1p to approx. £3:50, just look online.

Advance Notices

Door Swag

I will be holding a Zoom workshop on an Eco-Friendly Door Swag on Wednesday 23rd November, starting at 10:30am. If you are interested in attending this workshop, please email me at

arkinstall.mama@outlook.com and I will email you nearer the date with the zoom log in and a list of materials required. If there are more than 20 participants, I will put on extra workshops.

Lariat Necklaces: -



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

Next Month

We shall be starting to look at Stocking fillers for craft/sales tables and the craft is a lavender bag using ribbon weaving. There will be the usual block(s) of the month and the winners of the various craft competitions.

Debbie Arkinstall

Entertainments- Julie Afridi Martin

Hello everyone.

I hope you've had an amazing Summer and hopefully we have a great WI year ahead.



Please see below details for the Worcester Fayre outing and also a request for potential readers at the carol service in December.

Thanks to Janette who phoned to offer support with my request for ideas of what, you, the membership would like us to put in place and trips etc you might wish us to consider. I cannot do this without your help and await your responses please.

Can I make a suggestion? Maybe a whole group approach might be better here.

If presidents could please put out a sheet of paper and ask members to simply jot their ideas down for



Then post or email them to me. Who knows? With so many groups in WMFWI, I could be inundated!!!

Entertainments Committee Events

WORCESTER Dickensian Christmas Fayre, Thursday 2nd December



Thanks to all of you have expressed and confirmed interest in this event. The coaches have been booked and payment is now due.

The cost per person is £15.00. Please send your payment direct to your own WI Treasurer by 30th September 2021. Treasurer to send cheque per WI made payable to WMFWI to Kim Slivinski, 136 Common Lane Sheldon B26 3DN

We have a few spare spaces on coach 2 and 3, pick up and times are below.

Please [Contact](mailto:jtafridi@hotmail.co.uk) Julie Afridi Martin jtafridi@hotmail.co.uk or 0121 784 7010 or Kim Slivinski kimslivinski60@gmail.com or 07843123748 to reserve a space

Coach 1	Pick up
Allesley Village Hall, Birmingham Road, CV5 9GX	09.30am
Solihull, Bus Stop outside John Lewis B91 3RA	10.00am
Coach 2	
Yew Tree Yardley O/S Lloyds bank B25 8UZ	09.00am
Kings Norton Station, Cotteridge B30 3EG	09.30am
Halesowen Leisure Centre, Great Cornbow, Halesowen B63 3AF	10.00am
Coach 3	
St. Johns Church, Walsall Wood, WS9 9LP	09.00am
St Michaels Church Hall, 192 Boldmere Road B73 5UE	09.30am

Christmas Carol Service - Readers wanted



For our annual carol service

At St. Martins in the Bullring

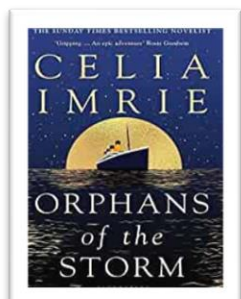
Saturday 4th December 2021

If you would like to be considered as a reader at the carol concert. Please contact Julie by 30th September with your Name, WI, Telephone No or Email address.

Julie Afridi Martin jtafridi@hotmail.co.uk or 0121 784 7010

Locked into Reading- Julie Afridi Martin

Celia Imrie - Orphans of The Storm



Published August 19th 2021 Genre - Historical Fiction

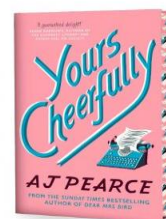
Orphans of The Storm by Celia Imrie is a thrilling and powerful historical novel based on fact.

It is set around the early 1900's in France, London, on board the ill-fated Titanic and in New York City. As the storm physically rages around, after three years of marriage, young seamstress Marcela Caretto has finally had enough. Her husband, Michael, an ambitious tailor, has become cruel and controlling and she determines to get a divorce. But while awaiting the judges' decision on the custody of their two small boys, Michael receives news that changes everything.

A.J. Pearce - Yours Cheerfully

Genre - Fiction

London, September 1941.



Following the departure of the formidable Editor, Henrietta Bird, from *Woman's Friend* magazine, things are looking up for Emmeline Lake as she takes on the challenge of becoming a young wartime advice columnist. Her relationship with boyfriend Charles is blossoming, while Emmy's best friend Bunty, is still reeling from the very worst of the Blitz, but bravely looking to the future. Together, the friends are determined to Make a Go of It.

When the Ministry of Information calls on Britain's women's magazines to help recruit desperately needed female workers to the war effort, Emmy is thrilled to be asked to step up and help. But when she and Bunty meet a young woman who shows them the very real challenges that women war workers face, Emmy must tackle a life-changing dilemma between doing her duty, and standing by her friends.

Every bit as funny, heart-warming, and touching as A.J. Pearce's debut, *Dear Mrs Bird*, *Yours Cheerfully* is a celebration of friendship, a testament to the strength of women and the importance of lifting each other up, even in the most challenging times.

Public Affairs – Liz Galloway

Autumn 2021

Climate Change The next few weeks will be a busy and very important time for campaigners and the WI is advising all members to look at the various information and action packs which are published online and to make their voice heard in any way which will influence policy makers, locally and nationally.

The Great Big Green Week (18 – 26 September) is being organised by the Climate Coalition who are asking us to help make history by organising a Green Week activity in our areas. There's clearly very little time to organise an event during the week itself, but there's an extremely helpful resource pack which covers all sorts of activities which you can carry out from now on.....do please visit the Climate Coalition's website and get some ideas. The resource pack is so comprehensive that it may well be of use to you in other contexts.

COP26 will be a hugely important diplomatic conference and the WI is urging you as a member of the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK to raise your voice and show your support for COP26 agreements that deliver ambitious and fair climate action.

The WI's position is explained in **The Whole Story**: Raising our voice to highlight the climate impacts on women and girls. I urge you to have a look at this campaign action pack online and to pass on the information to fellow members. Climate impacts have a disproportionately great impact on women and girls which should be mitigated by actions which are proposed. The **Whole Story** action pack shows how you can influence thinking in COP26 and there's still time to do this. Also, you can crochet and wear this **No More Loopholes** bracelet – pattern and crochet instructions are provided.



IPPC Special Report on Global Warming This is a recently published scientific report which updates predictions of effects first set out in the Paris Agreement. It looks at risks to health, livelihoods, food security water supply, human security, economic growth and ecosystems amongst many other aspects. The major risks are, of course, global warming and sea level rise. The Report provides fundamental guidance for policy makers.

Many other campaigns are ongoing but I've chosen to focus in this COG on Climate Change.

Liz Galloway.

Public Affairs Visit to John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries (19 August, 2021)



55 members met at the garden centre to visit John's Garden which had previously proved a popular venue for a number of individual WI's. The weather was kind to us in that rain was light and barely justified a brolly. It could have been much worse! The garden was superb and the visit appreciated by many members who expressed their thanks afterwards. The beds were being maintained by gardeners as our party went around and we were invited

to ask questions about plants and planting. An amazing number of different species made up informal plantings with year-round interest and brightly coloured flowers provided a riot of colour. Lunch was available in the tea room and members enjoyed a trip around the well-stocked nursery.

A point of information for those advertised to the public was groups, requiring gardeners on more.



who spotted that the price slightly less than we paid: large hand are always charged slightly



As many of you are aware, The NFWI is a member of ACWW – Associated Country Women Worldwide.

Each year Women's Institutes in England and Wales raise funds for various ACWW projects.

This is known as Pennies for Friendship; this is where members bring along 'pennies' to each WI meeting.

These pennies are collected together and sent to the ACWW office in London.

In August, secretaries will have received an envelope for their Institute's contribution to bring to the Annual Meeting in October to donate towards ACWW Pennies for Friendship.

All donations go towards WE – Women Empowered – projects covering, nutrition, sanitation, sustainable water, energy, and education. These projects are led by women and all help to make a difference to the lives of women in Remote villages enabling them to earn enough money to feed and look after their children.

Please bring your Pennies to your next meeting so that they can go in the envelope for collection at the Annual Meeting.

Sincere thanks in advance

Pamela Griffiths

ACWW Walk Barston Lake

Thank you to all the ladies who came to the walk around Barston Lake.

We had a lovely day with coffee, a walk around the lake and a bar lunch all in a beautiful setting.

I'm looking forward to receiving your sponsorships.

Thank you also for the donations to ACWW from ladies who were unable to attend.

The donations and sponsorship money go to help women around the world learn a skill which enables them to earn money to feed their children.

Thank you

Pamela

ACWW Representative for WMFWI



Pamela Griffiths, Dot Hall, Betty Waldron and Innes Brett