



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes

July 2022

Welcome to Summer



Members of Hockley Heath WI enjoying the sunshine in Barmouth.



Summer has arrived and we have experienced sizzling temperatures, it truly was 'Flaming June'. Let's hope our good fortune continues throughout July.

Federation members enjoyed all sorts of outdoor activities and events last month. Jubilee parties, walks, and trips to the beach. Federation events were well attended and enjoyed by all.

WIs have sent in many photographs of their exploits for the Over to You section. We love to hear all of your stories. It's also nice to hear that new members are joining after being invited along to events.

We are about to have our annual meeting at The Hyatt on 7th July, Liz Galloway would love to put your photos on the big screen for all to see.

We will share photos of the meeting next month for those who cannot attend, along with any information you may need.



Claire Woodland, Editor

200 Club Winner £10

94 – Susan West, Kings Norton Afternoon WI

In this issue

Chairman's
Address

Over To You

Public Affairs

What's On

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



Chairman's Address



Hello Everyone,

I know that it is said that time flies faster the older you get, but I find it hard to believe that we are already more than half way through the year. Every 22nd June my father would greet the day by saying "the longest day is

now over, the nights are drawing in and it's all downhill to Christmas" which as you can probably imagine cheered us up no end! I try to look on it as the best of summer is yet to come.

I am writing this before the end of June so Wimbledon is still ahead and so is our Annual Meeting where I hope to meet and chat to some of you. Along with your Delegates I spent all day last Saturday sitting through the NFWI Annual Meeting. This year I chose to attend via Zoom despite the Meeting being held in Liverpool which is just across the River Mersey from my childhood home. It only feels like last year that the venue was Liverpool, although it must have been pre-covid, and I simply didn't want to go there again. As always, it was a very interesting meeting and the main Speaker was the first ever female Black Rod and she gave an informative and entertaining speech. Your Delegate will be able to tell you about the day when she gives her report. Next year the venue will be in Cardiff and by then we should be totally clear of covid so anyone who wants to attend will be able to go without a worry.



Once again I have been spending time in my garden and my hanging baskets are beginning to look really good. With all the showers we have been getting I have been excused from constantly watering. Yesterday, I picked 10lbs of gooseberries off the one bush I have in the little area where the fruit bushes are. They were so ripe and heavy that the branches were bending to the ground with the weight. Unfortunately, gooseberry bushes are not very friendly and I received a considerable number of scratches for my pains but it is worth it for freshly made gooseberry pie and custard.



The red and blackcurrants are beginning to show colour but they won't be pickable for a few weeks yet. I had to do a Prince Charles and speak to them severely last year as their yield was minimal so I threatened to dig them up, chop them up and put them on the bonfire if they didn't pull their socks up! They must have been listening because there is plenty of fruit on them this year. I have netted them to foil the wretched pigeons.

Once our own Annual Meeting is over the Trustees will be having a break as we don't meet in August so there will not be another edition of the Cog until September. I know that most WIs also take a break over the summer so I hope the weather is good and that you all enjoy a holiday.

Best wishes to you all for a lovely summer.

Lynn

Over to you

Yardley WI celebrated the jubilee with bunting, food, balloons and a whole lot of fun. We quizzed, guessed the weight of the cake, played games and finished off with two amazing singers. Hope we did her majesty proud.



At our June meeting. We helped Arts in the Yard (the community art project in Yardley) on their way to a target of 2022 felt flowers for the commonwealth games.



The project needs any buttons. 2cm -3cm. If you can help please bring them to the AGM in a bag and give them to Julie Afridi Martin to pass them on.

Julie Afridi Martin, Yardley WI

Newton WI had an enjoyable Friday morning celebrating the Queens Platinum Jubilee, attended by 40 members.



We had a short film of the Queen's reign, followed by cream scones and a crown competition in which two winners were chosen from a very regal collection.

Melanie Wisler, Newton WI

Aldridge WI members Elizabeth Wolsey and Cherrie Hughes organised Jubilee decorations for the Garden on the Croft, in the centre of Aldridge, which is maintained by ladies from Aldridge WI. They do a brilliant job!



Barbara Leech, Aldridge WI

Victory Belles WI celebrated the Queen's Jubilee with a street party in the grounds of Bromwich Hall.



Special guest, a full sized knitted version of Her Majesty the Queen appeared, to enjoy her own specially prepared knitted afternoon tea.



95 year old member Betty Jones drew on her career as a Wartime Land Girl, to plant a heritage apple tree in the medieval manor house orchard, for the Queen's Green Canopy.



Claire Woodland, Victory Belles WI

Knowle WI partied in Knowle Park on 2nd June. We raised our glasses and toasted Her Majesty. To mark the occasion, we are planting a tree in this park.



It was a lovely afternoon enjoyed by all.



Stephanie Withers, Knowle WI

Berkswell WI held an indoor picnic for members to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee.



We all enjoyed our picnics and a toast to the Queen who also joined us!

Pamela Griffiths, Berkswell WI

Bournville WI members have knitted lap blankets for elderly residents in local care homes, pictured is Janet Everett.



Our tapestry has been moved and rehung in our new venue. Long standing members Lilian Jones, Sheila Kelly and Valerie Ward all worked on the embroidery when it was done some 25 years ago.



The amazing food members provided for our Jubilee meeting

Lynn Smith, Bournville WI

Dickens & Forshaw Heath WI

would like to invite any WI members to attend our Afternoon Tea on Monday 22nd August 2022 at Earlswood Methodist Church Hall – B94 5JR

Tickets cost £12 each and are available from Jane Henton 0121 733 1618

Kim Meadows, Dickens & Foreshaw Heath WI

Platinum Jubilee pudding Competition

When we planned a pudding competition as part of the **Cotteridge Church** Platinum Jubilee celebration there was only one place to go to for our Judges...The WI.

We were delighted when Jackie Poyner ...a WI Advisor and member of Bournville WI agreed to come with Christine as a fellow judge..



However nothing prepared us for the array and numbers of puddings/cakes that arrived. Jackie and Christine remained undaunted ... clutching sheets of criteria to assist them, as well as water, coffee, plates, and spoons. After nearly an hour they were ready to announce to the assembled gathering, the results. They were not swayed by appearance, taste was uppermost in their judging.

Certificates had been prepared and these were given out with prizes awarded to the top 3.

A Jewelled Crown came first, followed by a Flag cake in second place, and the Royal Biscuit Cake 3rd.

What a great time we had, and of course our thanks to our wonderful judges whose work was really cut out on a Saturday Afternoon. Thank you WI!

Sandra Walton, Cotteridge Church

Walsall Wood WI held a Queens Platinum Jubilee Party on 14th June.

As part of the celebration tea we held a Bake Off Competition. We had 10 entries and the winner received a WI apron.



The event also attracted two women who thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon of food and a quiz. They will now become members.

We also said thank you to one of our founding members Pauline Orton who has left the Committee.



It was lovely to give her a gift of an Orchid and card to say thank you to her for her commitment to the WI.

Sue Laws, Walsall Wood WI

Federation Summer Outing to Barmouth

We had a fabulous time in Barmouth on 21st June, beautiful weather on a perfect mid-summer day.



I only have one photo of me and Iris but the ladies of Hockley Heath took loads and even got to have a paddle!



"We all really enjoyed our day thank you Kim and committee so much for organising the day. Coaches and drivers were first class, not a thing to complain about and the weather! Just what we ordered!" – Sue Palfreyman, Hockley Heath WI.



Kim Slivinski, Yardley WI

Federation Quiz Night



A fun night out for all who entered. Teams of four battled it out, pictured are the winning team receiving their prizes from Lynn Smith.

88 members attended along with federation trustees. Tea and homemade cake was consumed, raffle prizes awarded, and friends were made.



The trustees would like to thank all who attended and continue to help keep our federation running.

Alleviating Loneliness

When the WI resolutions of mental health matters and alleviating loneliness had been voted on, I had an idea. I am Valerie Hughes, from Sutton WI, Norfolk federation, and I decided that a good way of helping was to set up a WI pen pal group.

Writing letters can be therapeutic, often you may look at things in a different way, giving plenty to write about. It is nice to get a hand-written letter, rather than a bill or circular. Pen pals can be supportive, encouraging, and inspirational, a person to share highs and lows with.

Getting word out about the scheme was difficult as it needed to remain a free service. I went to social media and the UWI Facebook group for help. A sub group 'The pen pal exchange' was set up. It now has over 1,000 members.

National federation are promoting it too. It is mentioned on My WI, and WI Life has written about it several times.

To apply you need to answer the following questions:

Name

Age

Marital status

Present or former employment

Interests and hobbies

A bit about your family

Full postal address

Email the answers to valerie.hughes08@gmail.com
Please mark the email WI Pen pal, (you should be able to find someone to help with this within your own WI).

Applicants addresses are only shared with the pen pal you are paired with, the scheme is GDPR compliant.

Pen pals will be matched at the end of each month, interests and backgrounds will be a common thread. The hope is that just being in the WI and liking letter writing should be enough to give you a start.

Thank you for your attention

Valerie Hughes, Sutton WI Norfolk

Public Affairs

The Natural World around us Arthropods!

Spring has sprung and summer's just around the corner and time and so I thought I'd look in detail at one aspect of creatures we can see around us every day. The diversity out there is astonishing. This month, I've picked on a word which is new to me ...

arthropod! It caught my attention initially because I've just had an **arthroplasty** which for those of you like me, who didn't have a clue what it meant, is a replacement knee joint. I daresay many of us will know to our cost that osteo**arth**ritis is inflammation of the joints!

Arthropods are creatures which have (from the Greek) a jointed foot. So, they're invertebrates with an external skeleton, a segmented body and jointed appendages. Amazingly, this group of animals comprises over 75% of all living creatures and they're present in every habitat on earth. A good reason for us to look out for some of them!

Arthropods number spiders, ladybirds, ants, grasshoppers, earwigs, bees, butterflies and a huge range of creatures that you can see in your garden.



I met this fearsome lady behind a hedgerow in northern France and she convinced me at a glance that this was not the ideal place for a comfort stop! I took her warning colours seriously and moved on but I now know that her venom is harmless to humans. The wasp spider has spread from north Africa and central Europe and has reached the south of England, so you may see one in your garden any day!

plot, I have a cat/fox deterrent which emits a fine spray of water when triggered by and occasionally gives me a soaking when I forget it's on! In warm, sunny weather it the beautiful dragonflies who amazingly seemed happy to perch at eye level and return my gaze. You can also spot bright blue damselflies when out and about in damp or watery



And then there are the pollinator arthropods, the bees, hoverflies, butterflies and similar. We know that the two hundred plus species of bees in the UK are under severe pressure. Many are solitary like the leaf-cutter bee I introduced you to last year but who sadly, didn't return to my greenhouse this year.



Recently, we learnt that two-fifths of all UK species of butterfly are at red list level rarity and at risk of dying out. As a vegetable gardener, I'm not keen on the various species of 'cabbage white' butterflies and moths whose caterpillars feed on my greens but it has to be acknowledged that there are many, beautiful and varied species that are vital to our crops and do no harm at all. There are even some highly amusing caterpillars although this one's from the Philippines – the spicebush swallowtail caterpillar. What a surprise to find your cabbages covered with these little smiley faces!

There are the rarer and often more specialised arthropods, the economically destructive like locusts, the commercially valuable ones like silk worms, the edible crabs and lobsters, the potentially harmful to humans such as scorpions and some tropical spiders. Surprisingly, I learn that contrary to popular belief, most tarantula venom is not fatal to humans. It's a pity James Bond didn't know that when filming Dr No although rumour has it that deadly or not, he's terrified of spiders! At the other end of the menace scale, how about this diminutive little 'jumping spider' who visited me while relaxing in a deckchair on a shady beach in Borneo? She catches (*very small*) prey by jumping on it, although I'm not sure what she was looking for on my hand, perhaps just exploring!



This year, the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) is encouraging each of us to promote another species of arthropod by creating an area of butterfly habitat to offset their current and dramatic decline. The RHS website provides ample information on bee and butterfly habitat if you search on 'plants for pollinators' on rhs.org.uk This handsome butterfly is a Red Admiral and the name apparently comes from a corruption of the 18th Century name, *Red Admirable*.

Let loose on the web, I became keen to research the links between arthropods and arthritis, wondering whether there might be a clue to a treatment or even a cure in the future, but that's for another day!

Liz Galloway, Chair Public Affair

What's On

Leisure & Wellbeing

invite you to play

Croquet

1pm Thursday 14th July 2022 at Kenilworth Lawn
Tennis Club, Crackley Lane, Kenilworth CV8 2JS

Tickets cost £8.50 and are available via your secretary

Dates for your Diary

07.07.2022	WMFWI Annual Meeting The Hyatt
14.07.2022	Croquet Kenilworth Lawn Tennis Club
02.11.2022	Craft Showcase The BMI
03.12.2022	Carol Service St Martins in the Bullring

Dickens & Forshaw Heath WI

Would like to invite you to

Afternoon Tea

Monday 22nd August 2022

Earlswood Methodist Church Hall – B94 5JR

Tickets £12 available from

Jane Henton 0121 733 1618