

Lancashire Federation of Women's Institutes

A Short History – 1918 to 2015

- 1918** First WI in Lancashire formed at Hutton & Howick – founder member was Ethel Rigby, a Preston born suffragette better known for destroying Lord Leverhulme's bungalow at Rivington .
- 1920** Lancashire Federation of Women's Institutes (LFWI) founded with a total of 14 WIs, six of which are still going strong. Mrs Assheton (later Lady Assheton) was elected County Chairman, a post she held until 1946.
- Miss E Greenwood was appointed Federation Secretary.
- 1921** First County Handicraft Show organised in Preston. It was held over two days in November.
- First two Lancashire Voluntary County Organisers (VCOs) qualified.
- 1922** LFWI had a float in the Preston Guild of 1922 Procession, the first time women had been included.
- 1923** Longton WI's resolution on the adoption of secret ballots at Parish Council Meetings was mandated.
- 1925** Miss M Birch was appointed Federation Secretary.
- 1927** Mrs A Danson appointed Federation Secretary.
- 1928** Lancashire resolution on improving rural water supplies was mandated.
- 1929** Mrs Assheton represented LFWI at the inaugural meeting of the NFWI Consultative Council which enabled county representatives to speak at national level.
- 1930** NFWI AGM was held in Blackpool, the first time it had been held outside London, and the last time for many years as the following year the NFWI Executive voted to keep it in London!
- Miss L Cartmell appointed Federation Secretary.
- 1932** Lancashire resolution on Pooling of Fares was mandated.
- 1936** LFWI exhibited at the Royal Lancashire Agricultural Show for the first time.
- 1937** LFWI had six seats and 18 standing places allocated at the coronation of King George VI.
- 1939-45** County membership declined due to war service. Members joined the Produce Guild to grow vegetables and fruit. Some WIs bought canning machines for preserving fruit.
- 1945** Lady Tomlinson elected Federation Chairman.
- Miss M M Langley appointed Federation Secretary.

- 1947** Mrs Cowper elected federation Chairman.
- 1948** Denman College opened and, in the first year, eight LFWI members had attended courses.
- LFWI sent an illuminated page for inclusion in a Gift Book sent to Princess Elizabeth on her marriage to Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten by NFWI.
- 1951** Miss M Cardwell elected Federation Chairman.
- LFWI celebrated the 'Festival of Britain' with a Folk Song and Dance Festival involving over 400 members from 30 WIs.
- 1953** LFWI were allocated seven seats for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.
- 1955** Lady Worsley-Taylor CBE, JP elected Federation Chairman.
- 1957** Miss M Cardwell elected Federation Chairman for the second time.
- Winwick WI proposal that the power and status of Parish Councils be increased was mandated.
- 1958** First LFWI calendar was produced.
- 1961** The Lady Shuttleworth JP elected Federation Chairman.
- LFWI sent a shipment of local cotton to the Solomon Islands and this continued until the 1980s.
- 1963** LFWI formed three WIs in psychiatric hospitals.
- 1965** A member from every WI was invited to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party to celebrate the WI Golden Jubilee.
- A new embroidered tablecloth with 10 panels representing aspects of the WI was presented for use at county events.
- 1967** Mrs C W Eastwood elected Federation Chairman.
- 1968** Mrs 'Betty' Eastwood, County Chairman, was co-opted to the National Executive Committee.
- First WI Market was opened at Grange.
- 1969** Several LFWI members took part in 'The Brilliant and the Dark' (specially composed for NFWI) performance at the Royal Albert Hall.
- 1970** Mrs M J Fitzherbert-Brockholes elected Federation Chairman.
- 1971** LFWI Newsletter 'Hotpot' was launched.
- 1972** LFWI purchased 8 Queen's Road, Preston as its new headquarters.
- LFWI were represented at Preston Guild.

- 1974** Mrs M C Lupton JP elected Federation Chairman.
County boundary reorganisation resulted in the loss of 27 WIs to Cumbria and eight to Cheshire.
- 1975** Miss Langley MBE retired after 30 years, and Mrs M Fairclough was appointed Federation Secretary
- 1979** Mrs F A Smithies elected Federation Chairman.
The 'Red Rose Badge' was introduced.
- 1980** LFWI celebrated its Diamond Jubilee with a Federation Day at Lancaster University and 'A Potted History and Cook Book' was published.
- 1983** Mrs K Blackburn appointed Federation Secretary.
- 1984** Netta Brodrick elected Federation Chairman.
Mrs K Blackburn appointed Federation Secretary.
The WI 'Women in the Community' bus spent a week at the Liverpool Garden festival.
LFWI Chairman's badge introduced.
- 1984** Mrs C Manton appointed Federation Secretary.
- 1985** Miss J Thornber appointed federation Secretary.
- 1988** Joan Fenlon elected federation Chairman.
- 1990** Miss M Winters appointed Federation Secretary.
LFWI 70th Anniversary was marked with the '1920 – 1990 Wall Hanging' and the publication of the 'Lancashire Villages' book.
- 1992** Maureen Gerrard elected federation Chairman.
LFWI had a float in the Preston Guild 1992 night procession.
- 1995** NFWI AGM returned to Blackpool.
LFWI 75th Anniversary was celebrated with a Garden party at Alston Hall and the introduction of the Adelaide Hoodless Fuchsia.
- 1996** Audrey Weatherill elected Federation Chairman.
Susan Orchard appointed Federation Secretary
8 Queen's Road property was sold and LFWI headquarters moved to rented premises on the Lancashire Business Park in Leyland, where it now has a suite of offices in Croston House.

- 1997** LFWI book 'Within Living Memory' was completed from members' memoirs.
The Centenary of the WI in Canada was celebrated with a bike ride around the county.
- 1999** LFWI held the Hoghton Tower Extravaganza of craft and floral art and also won the Huxley Cup for flower arranging at the Royal Show.
Members took part in a Gliding Day.
- 2000** Hazel Short elected Federation Chairman.
'Celebration 80' at Blackburn Cathedral marked LFWI's 80th Anniversary.
First Annual Fun Quiz held with six venues.
Hotpot on Tape was introduced.
- 2003** Lancashire's Sally Roberts became NFWI Honorary Treasurer.
- 2004** Jackie Hobson elected Federation Chairman.
- 2005** A Garden party was held at Alston Hall to celebrate the LFWI 85th Anniversary and NFWI Chair, Barbara Gill attended.
- 2006** Lancashire's 'Great Milk Debate' highlighted the crisis in the dairy industry.
- 2008** Sally Roberts elected Federation Chairman.
- 2010** LFWI 90th Anniversary was celebrated with:
- 'Snapshots in Time' travelling exhibition
 - A Jamboree at Slaidburn
 - 'Pageant 90' at King George's Hall in Blackburn
- 'Hotpot' was launched in colour.
- 2011** Mary Gibson JP elected Federation Chairman.
Liz Nicholls appointed Federation Secretary.
Diane Jenkins appointed Federation Administrator.
Aspull & Haigh WI were runners-up in the NFWI competition for a 'Little Black Dress' (using recycled materials).
- 2012** Horwich WI resolution for the Employment of More Midwives was mandated.
LFWI marked the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with 'Jubilation Day' at Haigh Hall.
LFWI entered a float in the Preston Guild 2012 Procession.
- 2013** Salford Angels WI completed a cycle ride from Salford to Denman College.

2014 Shirley Thornton elected Federation Chairman.

The Centenary Baton relay which started in Anglesey on 1 January was in Lancashire for a week in February. During the week the Baton travelled 700 miles as it visited as many parts of the county as possible.

LFWI held a Science Workshop 'Coming up Smelling of Roses' in partnership with Bristol University.

2015 WI Centenary

Lancashire members attended two national events:

- Buckingham palace Garden Party on 2 June
- Annual Meeting at the Royal Albert Hall on 4 June. The meeting was addressed by HM Queen Elizabeth II who was accompanied by The Princess Royal and the Countess of Wessex.

Liz Williams
LFWI Hon. Archivist

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