



## WEST MIDLANDS COUNTY NEWS



### Chairman's Chat

Dear Members,

Well ladies this is my last Chairman's chat to you all as I will be stepping down at the end of September having completed my term of office.

I must admit this third year of my "reign" was not quite as I expected. Over the three years it has been lovely to meet so many members, some old friends and I hope new ones. We still appear to be a very busy Federation despite Covid 19, as you all have found inventive ways in which to run your WI's either by phone, zoom, meeting in parks, hopefully this will all go back to normal soon, or at least the new normal they keep talking about.

The WIs that reached a milestone birthday this year, please carry it over to 2021, as we are doing with the Federation events. You will all get your Certificates showing the Special Birthday.

I am not leaving the Board of Trustees, so will be around if you ever need help. I am sure you will give your support to the next Chairman and be as welcoming to her as you were to me.

I will end my chat with the saying it is not what you know, but who you know, and remember you all "know" the 2,000 members of the West Midlands Federation, and there are not many people who can claim that.

Take care and see you out and about. *Iris*



### Diary of Events

<b>5 December 2020 cancelled</b>	Carol Service – St Martins in the Bullring
<b>Postponed to 9 March 2021 tbc</b>	WMFWI Annual Business Meeting
<b>19 April 2021</b>	NFWI Annual Meeting – Royal Albert Hall
<b>29 June 2021</b>	45 <sup>th</sup> Celebration Afternoon tea, Birmingham Botanical Gardens
<b>postponed to June 2021 tbc</b>	Visit to Middleton Hall (and Robert Peel Museum)
<b>8 July 2021</b>	Talk by Dr Kathryn Harkup on Poisons in Literature at the BMI
<b>4 August 2021</b>	Proposed visit to Buxton Opera House (HMS Pinafore)
<b>16 August 2021</b>	John's Garden visit (Ashwood Nurseries)
<b>September 2021</b>	Digital Forum at BMI
<b>Postponed to 9 September 2021</b>	ACWW Walk around the Lake at Barston

**Sub – Committee News****Denman – Debbie Arkinstall****DENMAN AT HOME**

Most of you will have heard by now that sadly due to Covid19 and the resulting financial situation Denman College is closing, it had become financially non-viable.

However, despite all the upset and anguish felt by members at the loss of this much-loved venue, Denman is continuing but online. From the early days of lockdown (if you happened to be on their mailing list) members have been able to access online courses or talks via the internet. This has been so successful that Denman will be carrying on in this format under the guise of “love Denman – Denman at Home”.

How do you access these courses? You just visit the WI website, look for Denman and access the courses that are on offer through the website. Courses range from cooking with the Denman Chefs i.e. Peter, Kelly and Alex. Craft courses e.g. WI Dolly and friends by Claire Salmon. There are felting sessions, patchwork and other crafts on offer and a wide range of talks by much loved tutors. Each session costs £5.00 and once you have registered details will be sent to you regarding access and materials if required.

The feedback that I have received so far has been positive and that these courses will continue for the foreseeable future.

I am waiting for a database to be made available to Denman Ambassadors of those tutors who would be willing for their details to be passed onto us (GDPR!) so that one day, we might be able to arrange workshops or lectures within our Federation.

*Debbie Arkinstall* – Denman Ambassador.

**Specialised Crafts – Debbie Arkinstall**

I know that during this rather strange time many of you have been making scrub bags, masks, scrub hats, scrubs for NHS workers and others, if you have well done! In fact, some of you have put my rather paltry effort of 24 wash bags into the shade. I ran out of tape! But I do know that others have been making the “Beads of Courage” bags for the Childhood Cancer Trust and just before I went away, I took delivery of 73 bags from Aldridge WI, which leads me on to say that if you have made bags then please let me know and I will arrange collection / delivery of them.

I know that Kathy will be amazed by how many will have been made.

I also know that quite a few of you have been knitting “Traffic Light Beanies” for maternity wards to use. Again, please contact me when you are ready to hand them over and I will arrange for collection/delivery of them.

My contact details are:- email – [arkinstall.mama@outlook.com](mailto:arkinstall.mama@outlook.com)  
Phone- 0121 382 7401.

I am hoping that soon I will be able to access the tutor database from Denman College so that next year West Midlands Federation will be able to host at least 1 craft workshop possibly in the City Centre at BMI. It will be a case of ‘watch this space’

*Debbie Arkinstall*: Chair Specialised Crafts.

**Music & Drama – Lynn Smith****CAROL SERVICE**

The Board of Trustees has reluctantly taken the decision to cancel this year's Annual Carol Service based on the following factors:

St Martin's Church is limiting the number of people allowed in the congregation and we would not be able to accommodate all of our members who usually attend.

We would not be able to sing which would make a mockery of a Carol Service.

We would not be able to invite Second City Sounds to perform for us.

We would not be able to serve refreshments.

Many of our members are in the vulnerable age group and would be unwilling to attend in case of infection.

Many of our members would be unwilling to use public transport to get into the city.

Although we always enjoy our Annual Carol Service, we feel that taking everything into consideration, it will be for the best to forgo this annual event for this year and hope that you will all understand our reasons for doing so.

I have already booked the date for next year.

Lynn

**Message from the Treasurer**

Some of you may already be aware that when Iris took over the role as our Federation Chairman I stepped into her shoes as our Federation Treasurer on the understanding that this would be for the 3-year term only.

Having previously worked in finance for 32 years, I was keen to do something different in my retirement so I had taken on the role somewhat reluctantly! Preferring spending time in my garden, with my hens or doing crafts and holidays!

Whilst I have enjoyed my term of Office as Treasurer, I am pleased to say that I will be stepping down after serving my final month this month (September 2020).

May I take this opportunity to thank you all especially the WI Treasurers who have helped support me over the past 3 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you all.

I will remain on the Board of Trustees to support our new Chairman with Administrative work along with Judy Massam and will continue to produce the COG in the Tree for you. So please do keep in touch. I will be willing to help in any way I can and look forward to meeting you all as soon as we can get back to normal again

Kim Slivinski - [Kimslivinski60@gmail.com](mailto:Kimslivinski60@gmail.com)

**Science & Public Affairs – Liz Galloway**

Here are some excerpts from the Public Affairs Digest and from the WI website. You can find out much more on ([www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk)) *Current Campaigns*.

**NO MORE**  
violence against women

The Istanbul Convention sets minimum standards for governments to meet when tackling violence against women. The full name is the **Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence**. It is a legal framework that exists to tackle domestic violence against women and girls and covers other forms of violence such as sexual assault and rape.

16 DAYS OF ACTION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:  
25 November - 10 December

<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Set up a donation drive &amp; produce care packages for your local women's refuge</p> 	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Take part in a fundraising event to raise money for your local women's refuge</p> 	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Arrange a socially distanced candlelight vigil in your community, or take part at home</p> 	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Take part in White Ribbon Day with your local community</p> 
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8 June 2020 marked 8 years since the UK signed the Istanbul Convention. However, the Convention has not yet been ratified by the UK government, which means it is not yet legally binding.

Further information, including what you can do to support the campaign locally and lobby government to ratify the Istanbul Convention is available on [www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk) under 'Campaigns'



As part of our "5 Minutes that Matter" campaign, the NFWI has launched a survey on cervical screening. If you're over 25 and have a cervix, you can use the following web address to participate in the survey which closes on 12 October. [thewi.org.uk/s/cervicalscreeningresearch](http://thewi.org.uk/s/cervicalscreeningresearch)



Educational video series on mental health. To support federations and WIs in starting and facilitating conversations about mental health, NFWI have launched a series of short educational videos. In each, you will hear from a WI member with experience in this area, whether that be through personal experience or their profession. The videos are accompanied by a discussion guide.



#ShowTheLove

Climate Change: How you can 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.'

*Join the WI's Climate Ambassador scheme.*



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Microplastics: A next step in our End Plastic Soup campaign is the formation of a new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Microplastics alongside Alberto Costa, Member of Parliament for South Leicestershire. This APPG will promote awareness of microfibre

plastics and their harmful effects on the environment to consumers and will work to ensure collaboration across industry, academia and environmental organisations. The inaugural meeting of the APPG on Microplastics will be taking place virtually on the **14th of September at 3:30 pm.**



UK households waste 4.5m tonnes of food a year that could have been eaten, worth £14billion (Jan 2020) and household food waste in the UK has **increased by nearly a third** as Coronavirus lockdown restrictions have eased.

theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN

Household food waste in the UK has increased by nearly a third as Coronavirus lockdown restrictions have eased.

We're compiling a list of tips on how to reduce your household waste and want to hear from you!

Get in touch with your best and most creative tips for reducing household food waste by emailing us at [pa@nfwi.org.uk](mailto:pa@nfwi.org.uk).

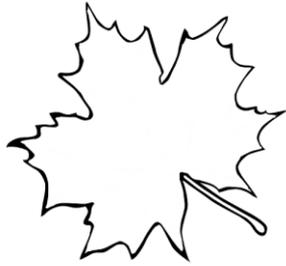
Keep up to date on our climate campaigns by subscribing to the PA Digest.

[www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk) for more information on Key and Current campaigns

*Liz Galloway*

### A Seasonal Quiz from Liz

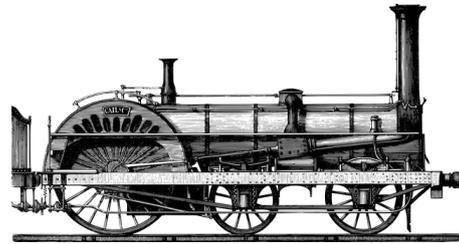
Take the first letter of each picture to make two words. (Answer on the last page) Number 4 is not a guitar, by the way!



1



2



3



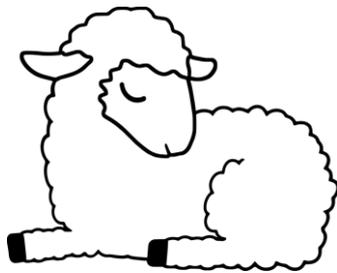
4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

## A Cautionary Tale!

This year, I sowed a packet of sunflower seeds that I'd had in my box of seeds for a few years. The mix of colours from gold to rust looked interesting and I planted a row of French beans quite close with the idea



that they'd be much taller and soon outgrow the sunflowers. The rest of the story has a remarkable similarity to that of Jack and the Beanstalk in that my sunflowers just grew and grew ...

eventually to over 12' 6". The stem of the tallest was nearly two inches in diameter and very prickly. At the stage this photo was taken, they're well above the roof of my greenhouse and you can just see the top of a rowan tree in the bottom right hand corner!

At one point a friend asked me whether the squirrels had climbed up them and robbed the seeds, as they had hers, but I knew better ... the air up there was so thin that a squirrel would have suffered from oxygen starvation and fallen to the ground long before it reached the flower head!

The first and tallest plant lost its head some weeks ago but the rest hung on. (Meanwhile, the beheaded one developed strong shoots all the way up and each of these bore quite sizeable flowers.) Eventually, in two successive storms, four of the remaining five collapsed exhausted, one by one, along with my row of climbing beans and are now reclining lazily across my greenhouse roof, still flowering and hopefully developing seed heads for the birds.

The last survivor remains defiantly vertical and I've certainly learnt the lesson, **CHECK THE ULTIMATE HEIGHT ON THE SEED PACKET ...** or any other piece of potentially useful information before you plant in future!

*Liz Galloway*

**Messages from WIs**

**Packwood and Bentley Heath WI – Pat Middleton**



Yesterday 20 members of the Packwood & Bentley Heath WI were able to meet (observing social distancing etc of course!!)

Before we embarked on this, we did a risk assessment with the venue and both parties were happy that we followed the guidelines and obviously those who attended were well aware of the circumstances of the afternoon.

It was so lovely to be able to catch up with a lot of our members, even though we were sitting outside under a gazebo with open sides, taking all that Storm Frances threw at us!!!

We also ratified the accounts, the minutes of our last AGM in October 2018, the Annual Report and also a report from Judith, our President. Copies of all these documents had previously been sent out to all members following the guidelines received from Lynn.

**Allesley Afternoon WI – Julie Neale**

Dear Kim,

Thank you for the cheque for £42, however we have now had a socially distanced Committee meeting where it was unanimously decided that we would not pay in this cheque but that the money be kept for use by West Midlands.

Julie Neale (Treasurer Allesley Afternoon WI)



**A BIG THANK YOU FROM ALL THE FEDERATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Monkspath WI – Marylou Jeffs



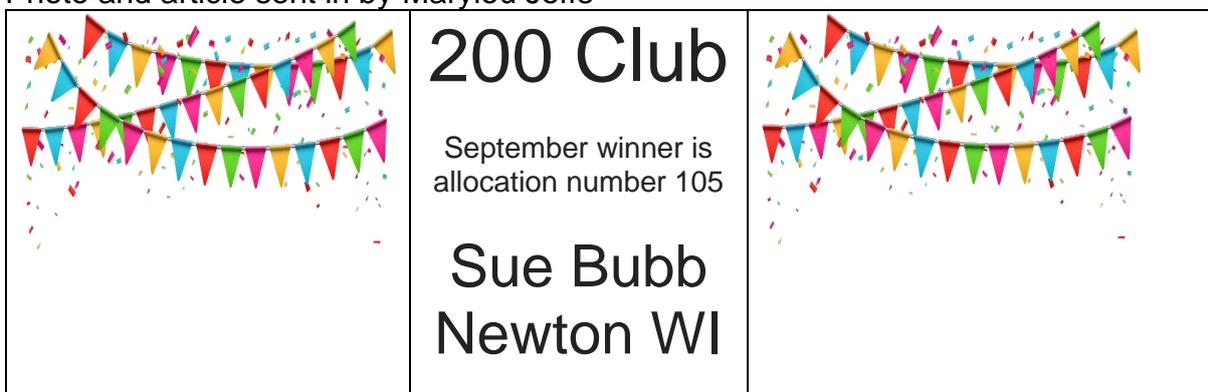
Photo above shows members of Monkspath WI enjoying a Zoom Games Evening held on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

We played a series of games, including a WI Quiz downloaded from the National Website.

We also had a ‘Conveyer Belt’ memory round with objects such as Jam, Apron, Raffle, Biscuits, Jerusalem and Committee.

We concluded with a Scavenger Hunt round where members searched their homes for specific items, such as Sewing Needle, Sock with a Hole, and Quarantine Craft.

Photo and article sent in by Marylou Jeffs



We will be doing the Grand Draw in October so I wish you all GOOD LUCK.  
We have only sold 167 shares this year so the winning pot will be a little smaller than previous year – 1<sup>st</sup> prize £150.00, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize £100.00 and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize £75.00.

Yardley Wi picnic in the park, 3 casualties and an odd game of bingo

On Monday, 20 of our members finally managed to nail a pretty decent mornings weather to meet at the park right by our normal meeting place for a good old chin wag, which, we managed to keep going for quite some time.

Having said which, I was a bit reluctant to leave the house as the previous 24 hours had brought the news of 3 ladies who had hurt themselves. One hurt her back, another cricked her neck and a third fell in the chicken coop and hurt her knee! We hope they are all on the mend.

A game of bingo nearly descended into chaos when I started calling the raffle numbers (1 -40) instead of the bingo numbers (1 - 75) fortunately a very astute lady simply questioned why all the numbers were so low? We managed to salvage some sort of a game but as I don't know the calls and I mix up the numbers I guess Bingos out in the future.

Eve brought us a folder she's been making during covid with funny cartons about the crisis and some of her own drawings which was simply lovely.

Lots of ladies were chatting about their entries for a 'decorate a coat hanger' competition. Can't wait to see them.

Looking forward to WI in 'real time' ASAP as I don't think we should attempt members in the park in the snow and ice with our recent track record!

Julie Afridi Martin Yardley President

**More from Julie**

**Crazy pieces of advice for women from old magazines**

"Ears that stick out can be made to lie close to the head. Get a kit that contains a harmless liquid adhesive and follow the instructions for flattening the ear." - *Ward's Charm School Handbook*, 1965

"Careless women never appeal to gentlemen. Don't talk while dancing, for when a man dances, he wants to dance." - *Parade Magazine*, 1938

"The way you stand and walk shows who you think you are. People who droop and just sort of drift around look like nonentities." - *Seventeen Book of Fashion and Beauty*, 1967

"Do not give your baby tea, coffee, beer, or wine of any kind, fried foods, pickles, pie, lollipops, candy of any kind, nuts, pancakes, berries, ice cream cones, rich cakes, puddings or meat gravies." - *Best Wishes Magazine*, 1965



"Similarly, girls who will be happy in marriage enjoy teaching children and have a fondness for old people. They are not strong admirers of musicians and poets though they may like good music or poetry." - *Modern Bride*, 1952

"Try to coordinate the colours on your face with your outfit so that you present a total picture." - *20 Stunning Make-Up Ideas*, 1982



*Answers to Liz's Seasonal Quiz:*

- 1 Acer (Japanese maple) 2 Umbrella 3 Train 4 Ukelele
- 5 Monstera leaf 6 Nail 7 Lamb 8 Eagle
- 9 Apple 10 Violets 11 Ear 12 Stars.

'Autumn Leaves'.



Send articles to The Editor @ [wmfwi@aol.com](mailto:wmfwi@aol.com) by 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month