



Middlesex News

April 2021

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

CHAIR'S CHAT

with Lorraine
Reed-Wenman

We are now well into Springtime and how lovely it is to see the various gardens, parks, verges coming alive with

the spring flowers and being closely followed by the trees, bushes and other garden plants. Did everyone remember to put their clocks forward on time? it is something that I always forget until the next morning, so I am either super early or an hour late and no matter how hard we try, there is always one clock or watch that gets forgotten!

Earth Hour was on Saturday 27th March 2021 and Earth Day, which follows on takes place on 22nd April each year. This year's theme is 'Restore Our Earth'. Please take time out if you can do a bit extra, maybe litter pick in your local area, recycle or simply change your energy usage. Think of how you can contribute or just spread awareness on the Climate Change issue within your community, every little helps.

MFWT's actual birthday is 6th April 1921, and I am hoping to see a few of you at our Sunday Afternoon Tea on 11th April from 14:00–16:00. See page 5 for details. If you feel inclined to join us on Zoom, summer hats would be welcome, and it's bring your own refreshments (Fairtrade if possible). No big speeches, no formality, all just for a bit of fun!

For those of you that take an interest in these things, there have been changes to the WI constitution and some policies. Copies of the constitution and the following policies can be found on *MyWI*: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Complaints Policy/Form and 'Access to Carers' to Members with Disabilities at meetings and Events.

April is MCS month (Membership Communication System). I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to keep this information up to date at all times for all levels of the organisation. If anyone has any issue with updating the MCS, please do email mcs@mfwi.org.uk and either Sarah or myself can help you.

As I am sure you will appreciate, the office will not be opening to the general membership for a little while yet. We need to see how everything goes to plan with the Government Guidelines. Can I please ask that you do not send anything to County Office that needs a signature or is too large to go through a normal



letterbox. There is no-one there to receive these items and getting them redelivered is a royal pain. Both the Treasurer and I are accepting items at our home addresses, please contact us for the details until further notice.

I am happy to announce that all our Advisers have been re-appointed by NFWI. They are Geraldine Attias, Sarah Endersby, Elizabeth Morrell, Yvette Rathbone, Carol Sullivan and Sarah Wilson, more news on them next month. Thank you all for doing a sterling job for our WIs!

Many of you will have seen and taken part in a member survey recently in order to help decide what type of meeting we hold for our Centenary AGM. If you have not yet taken part, please do, as it is far better for us to know what you think than to decide for ourselves. I frequently ask for members' opinions and responses with the take up being a little lacking – we can't do what you want unless you tell us.

Lastly – A Happy Centenary Birthday to us. Let's hope we can celebrate somehow as being 100 does not happen every year!

Lorraine x

WI BIRTHDAYS



**A very happy birthday
to our
April birthday WIs**

De Beauvoir	3 April 2015
Sunbury on Thames	15 April 1980
East End	16 April 2007

CENTENARY RECIPES

CENTENARY RECIPES

Calling all cooks!

Do you have some family recipes that you might like to share with fellow members as part of our **Centenary Recipe Book**?

Please email, with photos where possible, to secretary@mfwi.org.uk or contact Lorraine for her address for a postal submission.



FEBRUARY 2021 WINNERS

Congratulations to the winners of our March 2021 **200+ Club** draw!

1st prize - £35

Teresa Hamilton, Greenford

2nd prize - £20

Mary Hedges, Ruislip Evening

3rd prize - £15

Nikky Cussen, Sunbury Village

MIDDLESEX NEWS NEEDS YOU!

Please send articles (maximum 150 words please) and photos to newsletter@mfwi.org.uk in a Word-compatible format before the end of the month prior. Please note that articles received after this date will unlikely be included due to production deadlines.

Printed copies?

The cost of the printed newsletter for 2021 is £12.00 for 12 copies starting in April 2021. January, February and March 2021 copies will be free of charge to those currently receiving paid copies. An order form for 2021 is now with WI secretaries.

WIs will no longer be sent a free printed copy in 2021 in order to be a little more eco-friendly and to reduce costs.

As always, a soft copy (PDF) will be sent to all officers and members with an email address, to pass on, at no charge.

*The newsletter is also available, as always, on the **MFWI website**. You are free to print and distribute copies to your members/community as you wish.*

Need to send us a cheque while the office is closed?

Please email Sarah Endersby for an alternative postal address.

GET IN TOUCH

COUNTY OFFICE

Unit 3 - No 7 The Green, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7PL

Tel: 01895 440161

Email: secretary@mfwi.org.uk

***Due to the coronavirus situation, the MFWI office remains closed.
The best way to get in touch with us is email.***

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LALEHAM

Chris Walker

Amongst many things which had to be cancelled last year was a clay modelling course which Laleham president Helen Hurst had planned.

She sent off for the kit anyway and followed a YouTube video instead. As a result she managed to produce these lovely figures at her first attempt. Really clever and she's now planning a bigger hare for her garden. Watch this space... (and no pressure Helen!)



WEST EALING

Sally Greenbrook

Our February meeting was a bit of a strange anniversary for us, as it signified a year since our last in person meeting. We miss meeting in the community centre and can't wait to be back there, but we're so pleased that so many of our members have been able to engage with our meetings online.

We were delighted to welcome Celia from Eel Pie Island Museum in Twickenham to our meeting to tell us about the island's heritage.

Described as '120 drunks clinging to a mudflat', Eel Pie Island has a remarkable history including as the home of pioneering boatbuilders and as the birthplace of an extraordinary number of famous musical acts.

There was a time, for instance, when the Rolling Stones had a six month residence on the island and played every Wednesday night. The list of famous names that played the island was quite incredible – in addition to the Stones, during the 60s you could Eric Clapton and Rod Stewart, among others, at the beginning of their careers.

The talk also gave some of our members an opportunity to share their own memories of the island and other music venues at the time such as the Ealing Club and the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond.

We were astounded to learn that Eric Clapton still owes our committee member Janet 10 bob, and Mary once came across Marianne Faithfull in a fur coat looking for her pussy. Only at the WI!

MEMBER CHATS



Join members from across the Federation
(and some of our Trustees) for a chat.

Thursday 15 April 7-9pm
Sunday 25 April 5-7pm
Wednesday 28 April 7-9pm
Sunday 9 May 5-7pm
Thursday 27 May 7-9pm
Sunday 6 June 5-7pm
Thursday 17 June 7-9pm
Sunday 27 June 5-7pm

[Zoom link for all sessions](#)

Meeting ID
835 6237 6270
Passcode:
809020

CRAFTY POP-INS

Bring your craft projects and chat,
or just come and chat about crafts.

13:00

First Thursday of the month

1 April
6 May
3 June
1 July

[Zoom link](#)

Meeting ID:
879 0513 1326
Passcode:
405027



CRAFT INN



A weekly craft get-together on a Monday, hosted by members of
the MFWI Craft Committee. Bring along your unfinished objects
(UFOs) or your current project to craft and chat, and maybe bring
along a glass, cup or mug of something...

19:30

Every Monday

[Zoom link](#)

Meeting ID:
845 2969 7238
Passcode:
829648

Centenary



Afternoon Tea



*Sunday
11 April 2021*

14:00 - 16:00

It's our Centenary, and lockdown and any restrictions we may have can't stop us getting together even if it is remotely.

Join us for **Afternoon Tea** on Zoom on Sunday 11th April to kick off the Middlesex Centenary Year with Lorraine and the Trustees.

Dress up, dress down, wear a hat, bring along your own favourite refreshments: tea, coffee, cake ... champagne?

Zoom details

Meeting ID
894 3172 9004

Passcode
103462

OUR CENTENARY BANNER

Lorraine Reed-Wenman

A reminder that we do need to have your completed panels as soon as you have finished them, as the office continues to be closed, I would appreciate them being sent to my home address: please contact me for details.

We're sharing Greenford's banner again as we love the afternoon tea vibe, thinking of our Centenary celebrations.

Time to get a brew on!



MFWI ANNUAL MEETING

22 July 2021

The meeting is still planned to take place on **Thursday 22 July 2021**

At the time of writing whether we hold it at the **Royal Geographic Society** in South Kensington, or online, is yet to be confirmed.

Either way, we hope to have a day of celebration for reaching this milestone!

Pencil it in... We very much hope this to be a highlight of our Centenary year!

1921-2021

HAYES TOWN

Gill Wildman

New President Linda Lawrence 'door stepped' three members with 25 year loyalty certificates. Margaret Band was one of the original start up members of our WI 28 years ago.

Then onto Margaret Ryan, our oldest member at 92, and Win Venner, who both joined within a few months of each other and have held various roles. It was then on to last but not least Doreen Smith, who has clocked up 45yrs in the Middlesex Federation, with both Harlington and Hayes Town WIs.

Well done to all these ladies for being enthusiastic contributors to the WI. Hopefully we will all be meeting up again soon showing the ropes to several new members.

Clockwise from top right: Linda Lawrence with Margaret Band, Win Venner, Doreen Smith, Margaret Ryan.



SUNBURY ON THAMES

Gerry Attias

January's meeting started with the sad news of the passing of three members: Liz Keen, a committee member, Brenda Doran an ex-president and Marie Horne.

'I wear one of my beautiful costumes and talk about all the naughty bits of history you would probably not have learnt about at school! I discuss royal mistresses, prostitution, sexual diseases of the time and the methods used to prevent STDs and unwanted pregnancies. Warning, this tour is not for the prude, it is fun but rude!'



Image credit: Sarah Slater

This was the description our speaker Sarah Slater gave in her talk to our members in January, entitled *Sex, Secrets, Scandal and Salacious Gossip of the Royal Court, 1660 to 1830*. She spoke with great enthusiasm and showed slides and a vast array of



activities at Hampton Court palace where Sarah is a tour guide. We were joined by members of Hayes Town, Southbourne and Stanwell WIs.

At our February meeting our speaker was Anthony Boden MBE. Anthony spoke to our members on his 18 years working as a Prison Officer in the Feltham Young Offenders Institution. The Institution is committed to providing a safe and educational environment where young boy 15-18 years and young men 18-21 years old can learn new skills to help them on release.

He gave us an insight into a day in the life of the residents. They have access to

nursing staff, doctors and a library. All of the young people have access to religious services and multi faith rooms. Education is very much encouraged with 150 GCSEs passed, and one resident attending university. They also help each other to read. Anthony has worked in many sections across the Institution, and our members and visitors had many questions.

Our oldest member Kate Elliott celebrated her 106th birthday at the end of January. Kate lives with her daughter Pamela. Her family recorded their greetings so she could watch them at her leisure. Kate has been a WI member since 2004.



COP15, BIODIVERSITY AND THE FOOD CHAIN

Clare Taylor

This year sees not only COP 26, or Conference of the Parties 26, on climate change, but also COP 15 on biodiversity, both topics of WI campaigns. We also saw the publication of *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review*.

This is an important document, setting out the economic reality of nature as an asset to be protected for the services it provides, and it makes it harder for the powers that be to claim that it's too costly to protect nature when there is a pandemic to worry about and jobs at stake. It shows very firmly that we need to take action now, that the longer we leave it the more it will cost, and not taking action will cost everything.

It doesn't make easy reading. Nature, our 'natural capital', declined by nearly 40% between 1992 and 2014. Human destruction of nature undermines the ability of our planet to feed us, provide clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, to manage the impacts of climate change, to manage pollution and to be a place of beauty for us to enjoy. It also increases the risk of pandemics: environmental degradation and the emergence of novel diseases or diseases newly transmissible to humans are strongly connected.

As with climate change, it is those with lower incomes who suffer most. And both issues are intertwined – climate change drives biodiversity loss and vice versa.

The report shows how the value of our natural capital can, and must, be included into government and corporate accounting systems. To paraphrase quite a lot of pages, we need to ensure that we live off the interest, not continue using up the capital as we have been – and we also need to rebuild that capital fund by

making good the damage we've been causing.

Much of its content is about changes that need to be made at the level of governments or big business, but there are actions that WI members can take, and some are noted here. If you'd like to read further, you can [download the full review](#).

What can WI members do?

The prime cause of biodiversity loss on land is food production: intensive farming, pesticides, fertilisers. But claims are always that it's needed to meet demand, there is not enough food.



Food choices also make a difference. Diets high in animal products have a much higher eco-footprint than plant-based diets; currently 80% of agricultural land is used for livestock feed. If giving up meat is a step too far, making meat a treat and eating it less often, and cutting down on dairy and eggs helps.

So does choosing food produced in a more sustainable way than intensive farming: organic foods are the least intensively farmed but may not be accessible to all - a guide to the various food labels can be found [here](#). Demanding environmental information to be provided about entire supply chains – and not only for food, but also clothing, timber products – actually, everything we buy - also drives change.

Empowering women globally plays another vital role. When women have decent access to finance, information and education, once they have access to good family planning and health programmes, they have greater control over their lives. It allows women to choose. When able to support themselves, and able choose freely, women generally have fewer, but healthier babies; population growth slows and the pressure on biodiversity decreases.

COP 15 on biodiversity is taking place from 17-30 May 2021 in Kunming, China; governments from around the world will be meeting to set new goals for nature. Now is a good time to make our voices heard by government so they know we want to see real action to protect nature and all it does for us. As well as writing to our MPs, one way of doing this is by visiting [Voice For The Planet](#).

It's true that food security is a huge and worrying issue; anyone reading the March NFWI Public Affairs Digest will have seen that even in the UK there are large numbers of households without enough to eat. And yet levels of food waste continue to grow – and this is linked to lower prices causing waste all along the supply chain as well as in the home.

Reducing food waste will make a difference to demand; encouraging and helping others to do so will achieve even more.

For ideas, see the [WI Food Matters campaign](#) and this year's [Food Waste Action Week](#).



ADVENTURES IN CRAFT

Linda Southwood, Ruislip Evening WI
This new crafting adventure began with an event to celebrate 46 years of teaching.

I selected a six week cruise visiting many countries but the main focus was cruising the Amazon river which proved to be a wonderful experience.

I enjoyed the art and craft classes on board the ship and attended on a regular basis. Unfortunately this was brought to a rather abrupt end when I became extremely unwell and spent more time in the hospital, not my most favoured destination.

However another passenger was always on deck painting, her art work immediately caught my attention. It was vibrant, interesting and something quite out of the ordinary.

After pretending just to pass by as frequently as possible, I plucked up the courage to inquire, flooding her with questions. This was the start of a beautiful friendship and for me the opening of a whole new enterprise.

I needed a quiet place to recover, sitting with her, watching the art work unfold was the best remedy. I eagerly followed her advice, listened carefully to her instructions and tips. The first opportunity I encountered when ashore, I purchased something I could paint and with her guidance completed my first assignment. She kindly let me use her



brushes and paints, suggesting colours, style and designs.

We have remained in touch via the e mail and I send her pictures of my completed art projects.

Whilst not proclaiming to be an artist, this caught my attention and throughout the entire pandemic I have enjoyed spending many hours painting.

This has been a new 'crafty' adventure for me. Meeting this artist and personalising her craft has certainly added a new and interesting dimension to my hobbies.

Keeping busy since March 2020 I have painted 17 items, ranging from cats, fish, dogs and birds.

One of my favourites was a cat I designed for my son. As he is a clinical psychologist and was extremely busy in the hospital I had to add a rainbow.

What have you been crafting?

We'd love to see photos of your lockdown crafts—WI projects, personal projects, community projects...

Have you made any discoveries on your lockdown exercise outings?

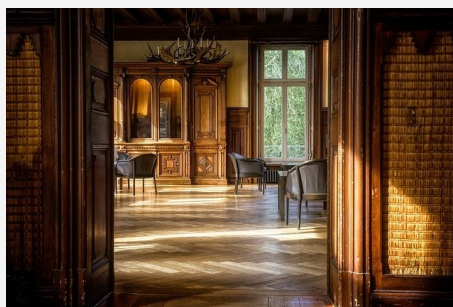
Please do share with us!
newsletter@mfwl.org.uk

LOCKDOWN SALONS

Sally Greenbrook, West Ealing WI
My husband Chris and I have long known that our friends are all interesting and intelligent people, and we have for years toyed with the idea of hosting salons - gatherings of like minded individuals discussing things that are of interest to them. Of course, life gets in the way and we never actually got around to doing it.

Until, that is, March 2020 came along and we were locked down for the first time. We decided to try hosting the salons online via Zoom. The idea was that for each salon someone would give a short presentation about something that interests them and then we'd have a discussion about it. We weren't really sure how it would go or whether people

would be keen but nothing ventured, nothing gained and we kicked off with a presentation from me about the Halifax Explosion.



To our slight amazement, the salons have been a resounding success and we've hosted them every Saturday night since late March last year. By the time you read this, we will have been going for a year. We've had some incredible

presentations about some fascinating subjects including (to name just a few) witches of Scotland, the history of profanity, the A55 in North Wales, British school dinners and John Singer Sargent.

For us, it's also provided a way to keep in touch with our friends and actually to make new friends. People have joined us who we vaguely knew pre-lockdown but are now friends. We've even gone international with one of my husband's school friends joining us from New Zealand, eating his breakfast while the rest of us enjoy a drink.

At a time when a lot of people have been quite lonely and isolated, we've managed to build a little community. We're all looking forward to the day when we can meet in person, some of us for the first time.