



Middlesex News

April 2026

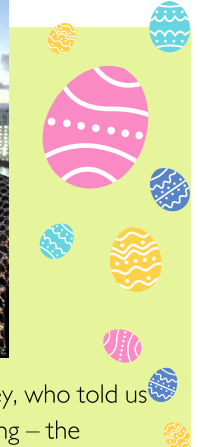
theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



Chair's Chat

Angela Chessman

Hello everyone.
I hope you are all well.



I am writing this straight after our Annual Council meeting – I do hope those of you who were there enjoyed your day – I thought it was great.

If you weren't there – why not??

We were back at Questors Theatre in Ealing; it has proved a popular venue for the last couple of years, and this year was no exception.

The staff were very friendly and helped the day to run smoothly. The weather was lovely, allowing many of our members to have lunch outside.

Our speakers covered a range of subjects.

In the morning, we heard from Ian McHugh about the music of West London, which brought back memories for a lot of us.

Later we heard from Caroline Waterman – a WI member - who gave a real insight into costume making for theatre, operas and films.

They were both really interesting and engaging.

In the afternoon we heard from Philippa Langley, who told us about her experiences searching for - and finding – the remains of Richard III and her thoughts on the Princes in the Tower.

It was a fascinating talk and our members had lots of questions. All three speakers were brilliant and I'm sure you will agree that there was something for everyone.

I would like to thank everyone who helped to make the day a success and to all members who attended. I have had some lovely feedback from those who did attend; I am really pleased that you enjoyed it.

As you probably know, I stepped down as Chair after the Annual Council Meeting.

I have had a wonderful four years, and it has been a real pleasure meeting so many of you and taking part in some of your celebrations.

Sarah is also stepping down from her role as Treasurer, and I would like to thank her for being an excellent Treasurer and for all of the work she has put in to keep our finances in order. I would also like to thank all of my fellow Board members for the help and support they have given me during my term of office and send them my best wishes for the future. Finally, thanks to our excellent Secretary, Georgina. She has been a real asset to the Federation, as well as being a joy to work with.

Best wishes to you all.

Kind regards

Angela



MIDDLESEX FEDERATION OF WIS
WI
Sunbury on Thames
theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

NFWI ANNUAL MEETING
4th June 2026

Join Sunbury on Thames WI at our NFWI Annual Meeting Watch Party!

Where:
We'll be at The Orangery, Squires Garden Centre, Halliford Road, Upper Halliford TW17 8SG. Free Parking available.

What's On:
The meeting will run from 10.30am to 4.30pm, with a lunch break at 12.30pm.
The guest speakers will be:
Founder of Starling Bank, Ann Boden, & Physicist and Astronomer, Michelle Dougherty,

Lunch:
There is Squires Café for a sandwich or a cake, there is also their Restaurant for hot food, or you can bring your own lunch! No need to book, just turn up, we would love to see you.

Free to all members of MFWI.

Newsletter deadlines >>> see page 2

WI BIRTHDAYS



A very Happy Birthday to the WIs celebrating in April

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

WI Lottery

You can support Middlesex Federation by buying WI lottery tickets through our WI Lottery page.

Follow the link below to our page:

<https://www.thewilottery.co.uk/support/middlesex-federation-of-womens-institutes>



200+ CLUB

Congratulations to the winners of our recent **200+ Club** draws:

1st prize - £80
Lyn Coleman, Ashford Evening

2nd prize - £60
Gill Woodward, Stanwell

3rd prize - £40
Angela Chessman, Stanwell

4th prize - £20
Viv Maclennan, Ruislip Evening



GET IN TOUCH

COUNTY OFFICE

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The MFWI office is open 9am-1pm Mondays and Wednesdays

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Newsletter Info

Please send articles (maximum 150 words please) and photos (largest size possible, as separate attachments, please) to newsletter@mfwi.org.uk. Articles received after the deadline are unlikely to be included due to production deadlines. Sometimes space limitations mean we may hold articles over to the following issue.

Deadlines

- **May 2026 issue: 17 Apr**
- **Jun 2026 issue: 22 May**
- **Jul 2026 issue: 19 Jun**

A PDF copy is sent to all members with an email address at no charge.

The newsletter is also available on the [MFWI website](#) as a PDF file. You are free to print and distribute copies to your members/community as you wish.

From a members point of view

Kay Crone

The MFWI ACM was a great day out. The meeting opened with Jerusalem and after the business side of things (which is just like a version of individual WIs AGMs), with an annual report and finance accounts, we had the first of 3 speakers.

Ian McHugh is a Blues guitarist as well as a Blues radio DJ. He gave a very interesting and colourful history of the Crawdaddy Club, which was an important stepping stone for bands like The Rolling Stones and The Yardbirds.

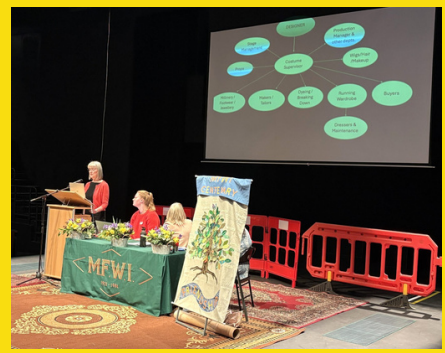
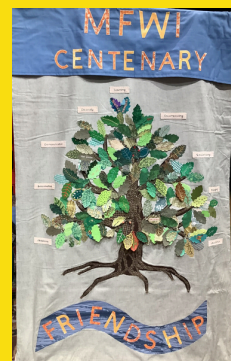
This was followed by a digital update from Georgina, who has helped many members and WIs this year, get to grips with the software used by the WI Officers and also with social media - helping us to understand technology a little better. Reports from the Craft team and then a 2-minute report from two WIs followed.

Our next speaker was Caroline Waterman, on "The Role of a Costume Supervisor". This was fascinating and will certainly make us see costumes in theatre, films and on TV in a new light, as we saw the amount of work and detail that goes into each and every costume in any production. Caroline is also a WI President; I don't know how she finds the time!

After a break for lunch, winners of the 200+ Club, the bursaries and the raffle were all announced, and we had a recap of the resolutions and the role of our Public Affairs team.

Finally, our last speaker was Philippa Langley, the historian known for discovering the remains of King Richard III under a car park in Leicester. What a story of determination and belief in herself; It took her 8 years to persuade the authorities to do an archaeological dig in the car park - and when they did, they found the remains on the first day, exactly where she had predicted they would be!

All in all, it was fantastic value for money for the entry price! We are sad to see Angela Chessman and Sarah Endersby stepping down from their roles, although they have certainly given enough of their time to the MFWI and deserve a good rest. We look forward to welcoming the new Officers to their roles and helping them to succeed as well as their predecessors have.



Ashford Evening Deborah Martin

For the March meeting, Ashford WI whetted its appetite in readiness for Easter with a talk about the history of chocolate by our return speaker, Tricia Thompson. Although we learned a lot about where this favourite food comes from, unfortunately there were no samples.



Our monthly daytime craft session was a sea of yellow netting as members shaped it into sunflowers to hang on their doors. The craft attracted the attention of the catering staff at the community centre where we meet and two of the cooks placed orders.



A trip to the Theatre Royal in Windsor brought together 21 members and former members to see the show, The Rock and Roll Man. While enjoying the music and dancing, members also discovered where the term 'rock and roll' came from and where it all began. The group can look forward to another theatre trip in May with more to come after that.

Sunbury on Thames Anne Spencer-Edwards

On a warm February day our ladies gathered to hear from LK Wilde, author. Laura explained how she takes factual events and weaves novels around them. The Ladies of Llanfairpwll, one of many books written by Laura, tells the story of the very first WI opened in the UK. A very readable book with fascinating information, not the least of which is that Colonel Richard Stapleton-Cotton was the only man to join the WI. He was instrumental in introducing Madge Watts to the ladies of Llanfairpwll. The WI was a rare mix, at that time, with titled ladies and farmers wives.



Our ladies have been busy knitting and crocheting 285 poppies for Standing with Giants. The memorial will be in Normandy. Others have kindly knitted 'twiddle muffs and twiddle cushions' for a local group supporting dementia and Alzheimer patients to use.

Field Dames Stavroulla Panayi

Field Dames WI thought that it would be useful and in line with the WI resolution of Bystanders can be Lifesavers, to arrange a training session with a local first aid training company.

We not only learnt about CPR and how to use a defibrillator on babies, children and adults, but also how to deal with choking, asthma attacks, falls and bleeding.



Let's hope we never have to use it, but if we do, at least we now know what to do.

Ruislip Evening Sandy Channon

March is our birthday month, and our committee planned a full programme for the evening.



It was our AGM to start the evening. As Dot was standing down as President, we thanked her for all her hard work over the past two years and are happy she is staying on the committee. There was an overwhelming vote for Viv, and we welcomed her as our new President.

We also welcomed several guests from other local WIs - we hope they enjoyed the evening. We displayed an amazing selection of items our ladies have made over the past year during craft evenings.



The Mayor of Hillingdon Philip Corthorne kindly accepted our invitation to speak about his year as Mayor. He said he has had an amazing year attending many local events including the Hillingdon Community Awards, a trip on the Hillingdon Narrowboats Association and has met many exceptional volunteers from all over the borough. Our group also went on a lovely day out on the Narrowboats and have chosen it as our Charity of the Year.

After a short break for refreshments, a lovely selection of food provided by Lorraine and of course birthday cake, we were entertained by the Reminiscence Roadshow, a voluntary group who are based at Questors Ealing. It really was a wonderful trip down memory lane. We finished with an excellent array of raffle prizes. Many thanks to all members of the Committee who made it a very special evening.



North West London Caroline Waterman



The shortest month of the year flew by!

We started with a private tour of the Foreign Office where highlights included the Grand Staircase, the Durbar Court, and being able to peek through a gate directly opposite the front door of Number 10.

At our meeting we enjoyed a very informative talk about the history of Kensal Green Cemetery and the efforts of the volunteer Friends group to maintain and conserve this remarkable local landmark right on our new venue's doorstep.

Following the success of holding both afternoon and evening Book Club sessions we continued this in February with an increased number being able to attend, provoking lively discussions of *The Land in Winter* (Andrew Miller) at both.

A muddy, but very enjoyable Walking Club outing rounded off the month, with temperatures even mild enough for a picnic rather than a pub lunch. This time we tackled section 16 of the London LOOP walking from High Barnet to Elstree and Borehamwood. It's wonderful to find so many green spaces that are easy to reach by public transport.





Teddington Fiona Twitcher



We began our March meeting with a delicious cake to celebrate Teddington WIs 15th birthday and International Women's Day.

Then our speaker, Dr Helen Spencer, gave an inspiring talk about her expedition to ski the "Last Degree" to the South Pole. As a child, Helen was obsessed with the polar explorer, Ernest Shackleton, and when she lost her parents in a tragic accident, she took on the challenge to overcome her grief and, at the same time, raise money for Parkinson's UK. Helen went through a gruelling training regime; running, hauling tyres across Richmond Park, exercising in a cold chamber at -60 degrees C and in a high-altitude training centre.



In December 2024 she set off, via Chile to Union Glacier in Antarctica. She, and her three other expedition members, were then flown four hours by ski plane to the interior. The team then set off pulling their heavy pulks. We learnt about how they ate, made water, slept, and managed their waste on the arduous journey. They completed the 120km trek in eight-days, skiing for 14 hours on the final day.



Helen reminded us that dreams take time and that outside our comfort zone is where the magic happens. What an amazing woman!



Bedfont Belles Jenny Hanrahan

Well, our committee did it again. Another fun evening at our meeting this month.

Easter crafts prompted much discussion about colours and wobbly hands. Jean produced a great lucky dip.

No-one won our Alphabet game, so it rolls over to next month. Wendy and Marion organised the raffle. Plans were made for a local pub lunch later in the month.



Hillingdon Diane Street



In February David Street gave us a talk about the postal services in the Channel Islands during WWII. He showed examples of people making their own envelopes and re-using others. The most interesting thing was that they cut the stamps in half diagonally. As they were occupied by the Germans, they quickly ran out of everything. A great insight into people's ability to make do.



In March our WI celebrated 107 years in existence. Obviously, no original members. We each took a plate of food, and our president made the lovely cake. We had a really enjoyable afternoon with hats, banners, and Easter eggs courtesy of members.

Stanwell WI has been as busy as ever this spring, with members coming together for a wonderfully varied programme of activities. In the lead-up to Easter, there was plenty of creativity on display as we gathered to make colourful Easter bonnets for chocolate eggs.

Not all our efforts were quite so decorative, but just as meaningful. Members have been hard at work finishing off a batch of trauma teddies—small handmade bears destined to provide comfort to children in difficult situations. It's a project close to many hearts, and it was satisfying to see the final stitches completed and the collection ready to be passed on.

We also enjoyed a lively evening together at a quiz night, where competitive spirits were high and knowledge was put to the test.

While not everyone came away as a winner, the shared laughter more than made up for it. The evening was rounded off with a lovely meal, giving everyone a chance to relax, chat, and enjoy each other's company.



All in all, it's been a fulfilling and sociable few weeks for the WI - combining creativity, community spirit, and a good deal of fun.

Stanwell Louise Stuart



Southbourne Rose Watson

Our speaker for our March meeting was Chris Truran who entertained with a talk called "A funny thing happened on the way to the Old Bailey". He kept us enthralled with slides showing pictures of the inside of the Old Bailey and tales of various crime scenes he had attended and what the result were after the accused's trial.

We had a stall selling craft items, that had been made by us alongside homemade cakes and jams. This also proved very popular with members.



Our competition for an item beginning with the letter "W" was won by Heather Mills with her wool sample. It certainly was a very amusing and enjoyable evening.



Laleham Chris Walker

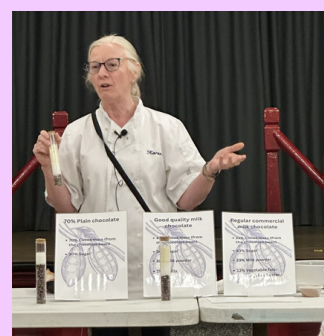
Members enjoyed a really great presentation about chocolate at our last meeting.

Karen Ballard, from The Chocolate School in Woking, spoke about this very tasty subject - where it comes from, how it is made into the chocolate we eat and the different types and quality available.

She gave a demonstration of tempering chocolate and encouraged us all to "try this at home" to make our own Easter Eggs.

Karen provided some much appreciated samples of chocolate as well!

Another excellent raffle from Kim completed a great evening.



Easter I SPY



Chocolate bar slogans

Fill in the blanks or name the chocolate bar known for that slogan

1. Have a break, have a _____
2. A ___ a day helps you work, rest and play
3. How do you eat yours?
4. You're not you when you're hungry
5. A finger of _____ is just enough
6. Melts in your mouth, not in your hands
7. Two for me, none for you
8. It's not _____, it's mine.



Coordinates Egg Hunt



6. (2,1)
7. (6,3)
8. (0,2)
9. (4,0)
10. (0,0)

1. (6,1)
2. (1,6)
3. (3,3)
4. (3,4)
5. (5,5)

6. M&M or Minstrel
7. Twix
8. Terry's

1. KitKat
2. Mars
3. Cadbury Creme Egg
4. Snickers
5. Fudge

5 Chicks
7 Purple eggs
10 Carrots
6 Pink Bunnies

Coordinates

Slogans

I Spy

10 Questions with...

1921-2021

yourself

Ask yourself these 10 questions for some self-reflection. It could help identify some of your core values, how you define personal success, address fears and assess happiness (or so they say).

1. What do I value most in life?

4. What fears are holding me back?

8. What do I want to accomplish before I die?

2. What is my definition of success?

5. Am I happy doing what I'm currently doing?

9. If my life were a story, what would I want the plot to be?

3. What brings me joy that doesn't require me to feel "productive"?

6. When do I feel most like myself?

10. Does how I see myself align with how I want others to see me?

7. What am I grateful for?

And if that isn't your thing here are some positive sayings to (hopefully) brighten your day

1. "Every day might not be good, but there is good in everyday".
2. "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow".
3. "It always seems impossible until it's done" – Nelson Mandela.
4. "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream" – C.S. Lewis.
5. "The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be" – Ralph Waldo Emerson.
6. "Stop being afraid of what can go wrong and start being positive about what can go right".
7. "Where you are, is not who you are".
8. "Just one small positive thought in the morning can change your whole day" – Dalai Lama.
9. "You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think" – A.A. Milne.
10. "Everything is okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end"

YOU CAN DO IT



LORRAINE'S CRAFTS

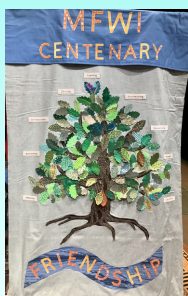
A weekly craft get-together, hosted by Lorraine.

19:30, every Monday

Zoom link

Meeting ID: 8528335 4467

Passcode: 358099



CRAFTY CORNER

It was such a pleasure to display the Centenary banner to which so many members contributed. You may remember that the project began as a Chair's challenge competition for a design for a federation tablecloth in October 2023. There were only three entries, our Chair, Angela liked each of them for different reasons. The committee decided to put them together to make a cloth. One entry was an oak tree with 'Friendship' written underneath it. Another was a map of Middlesex (old) county surrounded by rivers, and the other was a hand encompassing the Middlesex logo and words relevant to the WI beginning with the letters of 'Middlesex'. During the design process, the committee discovered many beautiful table cloths in our archives, and felt that these should be used. A banner would be different, and possibly used more by members. When this was put to the Board of Trustees, they agreed to support us with the change of plan. Then we asked for your help. Two years, a decorated oak tree trunk, and many leaves later, we have a beautiful banner. The committee spent many months stitching everything into place and making it easily transportable. We now have a banner unique to Middlesex Federation, for use whenever wanted. It's already been booked for three events. Contact the office for information on availability.

Dabble Day

You're invited to a

Dabble Day

Join us for a "Pin and Stitch" event.
We will be making greeting cards.

30th April at 10:00 - 3:00pm

Cost will be between £5 - £10

Location: MFWI County Office

FUTURE DABBLE DAY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 11th June – Sashiko stitching blocks.

Tuesday 18th August – Crochet corner to corner squares

October (date to be confirmed) – fabric collage book covers.

Tuesday 1st December – Hand sewn Christmas decorations.

All sessions last from 10 am till 3 pm

Please contact craft@mfwi.org.uk to book your place.