



Middlesex News

June 2026

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



Chair's Chat

Alison Fremantle

Dear Members,

Last month I, and other Board of Trustee members, were invited to a wonderful evening at Spelthorne Group meeting. Thank you to all who helped everything run so smoothly and for being great hosts. We particularly enjoyed meeting members from the various groups and eating your delicious homemade 'finger foods'. In September I am looking forward to the Middlesex West Area Group meeting and thoroughly recommend other groups across the Federation getting together for some entertainment, good food, and a good chat too.

We do like to meet face to face don't we? I am sad, that again, we will be having an on-line National Annual Meeting. However, last year, at West Drayton, we made it into a party where we could get together to share food and critical opinions of the speakers, and we heard first-hand the debate and the result of the resolution (I think far better than reading it in the WI Magazine). I am looking forward to repeating the process at Teddington WI this year. They have kindly invited all MFWI members - and the bigger the party the better! It's not too late to get a few friends together and have a party of your own! (Joining details in MyWI).

[NFWI Annual Meeting Observer tickets](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nfwi-annual-meeting-2026-observer-tickets-registration-1541107226199?aff=oddtcreator)

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nfwi-annual-meeting-2026-observer-tickets-registration-1541107226199?aff=oddtcreator>



I loved reading the Middlesex News about Hayes Town WIs activities – Women's month marked by a presentation at Yeading Library, and unveiling their Easter Topper at Asda, spreading the word about the WI. There's so much going on in all the WIs, I hope you'll agree that we're all great!

June is the month for the Great Big Green Week. Let's tell our community about our precious planet. I'm sure that in this lovely weather we'll be walking, communicating and maybe just enjoying what our green spaces have to offer.

Finally, a request for help with looking after our archives. I hope Liz Alcock, our present archivist, won't mind me saying that it's becoming difficult, even though fascinating, for her to look after the MFWI archives and help WIs to care for theirs, in an efficient and practical way. If there are any enthusiastic archivists among us – and it is a really rewarding, though challenging pursuit, - please get in touch with us. Liz would like some help with meeting WIs and going through their archives with them in an advisory capacity. Thankyou.

With best wishes for a good month,

Alison



Newsletter deadlines >>> see page 2

WI BIRTHDAYS



A very Happy Birthday to the WIs celebrating in June

Southbourne	03 June 1953
Greenford	11 June 1985
Hayes Town	17 June 1993
Stanmore	18 June 2018

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 - £40

Audrey Buchan, Halliford

2nd prize - £30

Christine Alexander, Hayes Town

3rd prize - £20

Enid Welsh, Manor Farm

4th prize - £10

Brenda Whittall, Manor Farm



GET IN TOUCH

COUNTY OFFICE

Unit 3 - No 7 The Green, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7PL Tel: 01895 440161 Email: secretary@mfwi.org.uk

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

- Jul 2026 issue: 19 Jun
- Sep 2026 issue: 21 Aug
- Oct 2026 issue: 18 Sep

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.

Spelthorne Sparkles with a Swinging Singalong

Jackie Elliott

St Hilda's Hall was the venue this year for the annual Spelthorne WIs' Group Meeting. Founded in 2010, this has been a popular event for a get-together of all the local WIs, each taking it in turn to be responsible for a certain area of its organisation.

On the door this year was Sunbury-on-Thames meeting and greeting. Once inside, there was a raffle table organised by Halliford and a table of cakes ready for the refreshments being prepared by Stanwell. At the back of the hall was the competition table organised by Teddington. This year's theme was "Dental Health Matters" and the entries were interesting and varied.



The result of the raffle was announced, adding that a profit of £180 had been made this evening. The raffle prizes included hampers and vouchers, and the beautiful floral displays organised by Sunbury Village.



Most of those attending had arrived around seven o'clock. This gave them time to meet up with old friends from other WIs and have a good chat before the official start at half past seven.

The business side of the meeting was hosted this year by Bedfont Belles' President Christine Smither, and she was ably assisted by their Secretary, Margaret Wootton. Their beautifully embroidered WI tablecloth was perfect for the occasion. Also, on the top table was Angela Chessman, recently retired Chair of MFWI, who was to be our chair for the evening. Angela gave her welcome address. She then presented a beautiful floral arrangement to Sarah Endersby to thank her for all her hard work and dedication over the past 9 years as MFWI Treasurer.

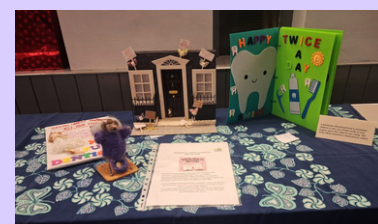
It was then the turn of Ashford and Twickenham to each give a two-minute report on what their groups have been doing during the past year. We heard about various speakers they had enjoyed and some of the practical craft activities they had tried.

We also discovered what a wide range of extra activities are on offer to their members.

Soon it was time for a refreshment break and Stanwell efficiently stepped into action. There were plenty of cakes to go around!



During this interval the Dental Health Matters competition was judged by Georgina, our MFWI Secretary. The eventual winner was Jacqui Mattinson, a multi-member from Halliford and Sunbury-on-Thames. Her entry was entitled "Tooth Fairies' Message to Number 10" and was a delightful mock-up of 10 Downing Street with fairies carrying a range of messages about the importance of dental health.





Stanwell Louise Stuart



What a busy month we've had! We had a speaker Sarah Slater who gave a talk about Royal Jubilees. We were astonished to find out that only 6 monarchs in British history have celebrated jubilees. She gave an insight to all the goings on and some interesting information regarding where it all started and why they were celebrated. We voted at the end for the monarch we thought had done the best for Britain. George 3rd was narrowly beaten by Queen Elizabeth 2nd. We thoroughly enjoyed the evening. We had a good turnout for Spelthorne Group Annual Meeting, well done to all involved, a lovely evening and a great sing-along. Such a lovely opportunity to meet ladies from surrounding areas, getting ideas from each other and sharing what we have all been up too. We started an evening book club, due to a demand! We celebrated our Birthday, walked around Isabella plantation in Richmond Park and even found time to take trauma teddies to Fordbridge fire station, well done ladies for all your hard work.



West Ealing Jenny Sturt



At our March meeting, John Boulton from the Ealing Civic Society gave an interesting presentation, including a short film, celebrating Ealing's civic heritage and discussing what we could do to protect its future. The WEWI Committee also gave a short presentation on their roles.



In April, we had a talk from Pam Redrup, from the Tea Darling vintage tearoom about how she started the business, and how she manages the tearoom. One lucky member won the raffle prize that Pam kindly donated, an afternoon cream tea for two at the tearoom!

With the onset of the warmer weather, our walking group has restarted, and Helen recently organised a 'Following in the footsteps of Samuel Pepys' walk around the City of London.

Our various sub-groups continue to thrive – the book group, craft group, pub quiz team and 'Join Me', which has been a source of several recent cinema outings.



HA:WI Abigail Reed



HA has enjoyed a variety of evenings from chair Pilates to the local Community Police, plus creative craft from group members. April involved two excellent events. A homemade cakes stall, at the Pinner Rotary St George's Day celebrations, raised £1036 for our chosen local charity Cariatad Baby Bank.

Our April meeting showcased an outstanding speaker, Derek Dean, who presented his specialist interest in Pelargoniums, not Geraniums.

Derek was a delight to listen to, a very engaging enthusiastic presenter offering interesting stories and a great sense of humour and happy to answer questions. He also had a variety of his own grown Pelargoniums, for sale, at reasonable prices. He showed us how to take successful clippings and how to pot them correctly. We at HA:WI would definitely recommend Derek for a talk at your WI group and look forward to welcoming him back another year.



West Drayton Juliet Humphreys



27 of us (including 4 from Hayes WI) had a lovely trip to Arundel Castle and gardens in Sussex. An unexpected diversion on the journey, sent us through some interesting villages. The castle is still lived in by the Duke of Norfolk. So many of the rooms are still in use, including the dining room with its enormous table set for guests. There was so much to see, including a bedroom used by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

The furniture and tapestries were fascinating, as was a rare collection of paintings. Be warned: there are a lot of steps, but the views are definitely worth it. Luckily it was a lovely day which meant we could explore the beautiful garden and, of course, the café.



At our meeting we had a speaker from Homestart Hillingdon, whose aim is to work with families, with at least one pre-school child, to help the parents to cope better. It was a very interesting talk. Carol, one of our members, is a volunteer with Homestart. She said it is about showing and sharing. After helping one mum to make a lemon drizzle cake, the woman was able to make one herself for her child's birthday.

Ashford Evening Deborah Martin

The May meeting prepared Ashford members for a summer of flower picking as the speaker, Suzan Williams, showed us how to preserve and press flowers.



Using flowers that had already been prepared, everyone designed their own cards to take home along with their new skills. Members attended the Spelthorne Group



Meeting, to meet with other local WI groups. It was a night of music hall memories and songs. The theme for the craft competition was based on the campaign for better dental services. Our Lesley Wheeler took second prize with her tooth book for children.

There was another trip to the Theatre Royal in Windsor to see the new play 'Now You See Me'.

It kept us engrossed and ensured we would be back for more shows in the future.

A walk planned along the Thames path turned into a walk for all seasons as the group was hit with rain, hail, gusting wind and spells of sunshine. A pub meal rewarded the walkers and despite the battle with the weather, more walks are being planned.



Southbourne Jackie Head

Robert Sisk from Hillingdon Libraries was invited to talk to us about what libraries offer other than just lending books.



We were pleasantly surprised at the variety of things on offer. There is Borrow box to download books and audio for free. 'Press reader' allows access to over 700 free magazines. There is a free 'Ancestry' search accessible in the library and much more. It was really helpful to find out all this information.

Barbara Betterton kindly grew marigold plants from seed. She gave all the members one to look after and in August, we will return them for our meeting to judge the best marigold. It is a lovely little competition which Barbara kindly does for us each year with a different plant. Mine is in the photo; who knows what it will look like in a couple of months.



This month's letter was Y, and Geraldine Murphy won the competition by bringing in a Yoda ornament.



Sunbury on Thames Anne Spencer-Edwards

After singing Jerusalem and hearing various reports, Sarah invited everyone to have a cup of tea or coffee and a slice of birthday cake to celebrate the 46th birthday of our WI.



We were then given an interesting talk by Bill Cunningham and his colleague Alan about the lengths to which scammers will go to relieve us of money. The telephone calls can come from anywhere in the world. Usually the caller wants your name, date of birth, home address and bank information. The best advice is never give them any

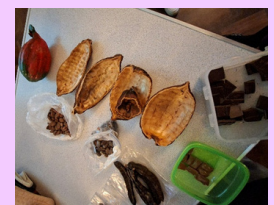
information and if they try to pressure you just put the phone down. Many older people receive calls on their landline claiming to be from banks, police, energy companies, etc. We were told sometimes the caller will invite you to ring your bank to verify, this is a trick, they don't hang up and then are privy to any information given by you to the bank. Just be very wary of any calls from people you don't know; it's highly likely it's a scam.

Harrow on the Hill Helen Clivaz

If I ever had to choose a last meal it would definitely include chocolate.

This month, Jennipher Marshall-Jenkinson gave us a talk about chocolate. We learnt that better quality chocolate contains very few ingredients, unlike cheaper chocolate that may contain palm oil, various additives and has a higher proportion of sugar. Good quality chocolate should have a shine and snap when broken. Cocoa plants have been grown for thousands of years, originating in South America, where they are still grown. Cocoa beans are also grown in West Africa. Much of the cocoa bean production is processed in Europe. The first chocolate factory in England opened in 1871.

We learnt how cocoa beans become chocolate. Then we sampled different types of chocolate. It was very interesting to note the variation of flavour between different types and brands of chocolate. We had a very enjoyable and tasty evening.



MFWI

Sian Cooley

Alison Fremantle and I were invited to attend the Buckinghamshire Federation's ACM. After singing Jerusalem we were entertained by a talk, with singing too, from professional chorister Chris Webb.



We had delicious coffee and cake followed by more talks, from members and from Dr Tamsin Addison, Paralympian dressage rider.

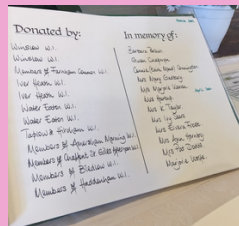


We enjoyed lunch and chatted in the sunshine, admiring the craft competition, the display of samplers from their Archivist and swapped some clothes from the 'swishing rail'. They also have a memorial book, where, for a small



donation, late members details can be entered.

We thoroughly enjoyed the whole day and were delighted to have been invited.



Ruislip Evening

Sandy Channon

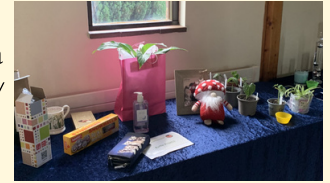


The subject for our May meeting was "The Great Escape" presented by Graeme Jenner whose Uncle Ken was a P.O.W at the Stalag Luft III camp in Poland. Whilst the 1963 film received excellent reviews, much of it was fictionalized.

The British and Americans were in separate camps; there were no Americans involved and the iconic Steve McQueen motorbike escape did not happen!

Graeme explained that his uncle was captured after bailing out of his plane and was sent to the camp, led by Roger Bushell who believed it was the duty of POWs to try to escape. Three tunnels were dug; Tom, Dick and Harry. Harry was used for the escape. It was hoped to get 200 men out on 24th March 1944. Only 76 men escaped, 73 were recaptured. The Gestapo executed 50 of the men caught, violating the Geneva Convention. Only 3 actually reached safety. The Germans discovered the escape before Uncle Ken could get out and he returned home in June 1945. Graeme is so passionate about his subject and gave us so much information it was an excellent presentation.

Charity donations were received for plants, teas and a delicious lemon cake made by Lorna, and the pennies competition, something cylindrical, was won by Lesley.



Harlington

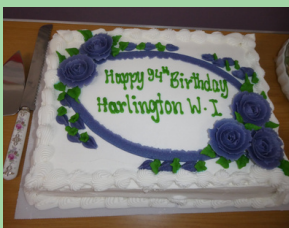
Rosemary Bradbury



We celebrated our 94th birthday at our May meeting. We were actually 94 in March but traditionally it wasn't celebrated then as it was during the time of Lent.

The lovely Susan Wynne brought along a variety of music and instructed us in line dance steps; it got our brain cells working and it was a challenge to remember the sequences but enormous fun!

Members brought along a wonderful selection of food and we raised a glass to our amazing group and our much-missed Sarah Wilson.



Public Affairs



Clare Taylor

You've perhaps been hearing about Great Big Green Week, which takes place 6th– 14th June and is organised by The Climate Coalition, of which the WI are one of the founding members. WIs and other groups will be organising events during that week.

If you're unfamiliar with it, it's designed to bring communities together to tackle climate change and nature. The two are more closely intertwined than many realise: nature helps regulate the climate, and changes to the climate can change or even destroy important aspects of nature. Trees, oceans, rivers, birds, animals, insects, fish and more are all affected by changing temperatures, seasons going out of sync and heatwaves, floods, storms and wildfires. Even small changes are damaging – when early spring warmth brings out flowers before the pollinators come out, we end up with lower crop yields and insects going hungry.

We need to look after both together and raise awareness of the importance of this.

If you'd like to see what's near you, have a look at

https://www.greatbiggreenweek.com/events_calendar



Halliford



Liz Davies

As the saying goes time flies when you're having fun and as I write this, I can't believe we're 1/3 way into 2026. Over the last 4 months as usual we have been busy. We started our 1st meeting with the resolutions followed by a bird quiz and bingo. An enjoyable evening and we learnt of birds we'd never heard of.

Over the next two months we had interesting speakers on Commonwealth War Graves and Swan Upping. Although a lot of our members had travelled to the Battle Fields and experienced the counting of the swans in the local area, we still learned facts which were new to us.

In April Nicola Griffiths carried out a glass painting workshop. We all produced a finished article of decorated glasses, vases, pebbles and jars. It was an interesting craft, and everyone was pleased with their creations.

Also, in April we visited Esher Theatre for a 60/70s music evening entitled 'These Boots Were Made for Walking'. It took us all back in time to our younger years and an enjoyable time was had by all.

Our usual monthly activities continue to thrive (walking, picnics, lunches and whist) and as always everyone is most welcome to participate.



Greenford



Trish Quinlan

Our longstanding member Rene Bridges celebrated her 100th birthday in style at an afternoon tea party which was well attended by family and friends, with an early visit by the local Mayor and a tribute from TV's Floella Benjamin who met Rene at the recent military reunion for the WWII veterans. She received a mountain of cards (including a card from the King) and flowers filled the room while a delicious buffet was served by her family. Rene also enjoyed the magnificent cake baked by one of her carers.

A few of our members finally visited the Fitzrovia Chapel near Goodge Street. It is only open Monday to Wednesday and sometimes holds weddings (for a mere £10,000) or funerals. It is a Byzantine styled masterpiece in marble and gold carvings and was the chapel for the Middlesex Hospital which was closed in 2005. The chapel's entrance shows plaques dedicated to all the employees of the hospital from consultants to cleaners, who died in the pursuit of their work, often contracting illnesses from patients. A poignant tribute to them all.

From there we visited another gem - the Victorian Foley Street Gents Urinal. It has been an excellent cafe for the last 15 years, serving delicious teas, coffees and snacks in what is a most unusual setting under the cisterns!



Laleham



Chris Walker

April's meeting was a social evening and our annual "tabletop" sale to raise money for a local charity.



A lively game of bingo, our regular raffle and a good natter completed the evening entertainment!



Bedfont Belles



Jenny Hanrahan

This month's meeting prompted a bit of nostalgia. The ladies who like to take photos showed some of their archive dating back to 2015 and the first birthday of Bedfont Belles. People, activities and places visited jogged memories of the fun we have had and the friends we have made.





Original name

What were these confectionary items originally named?



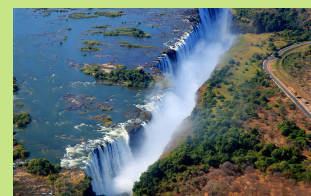
London Underground quiz

- Which of the following words appears the most on the Tube map?
A. Park
B. Road
C. Street
- Name either of the two lines on the network to run completely underground
- Which tube line goes the deepest underground?
- On the London edition of Monopoly there are three train stations that are connected to the London Underground Network. Name them.
- Which tube line has the most stations
- The shortest distance between two adjacent stations is only 260 meters but which two stations?



7 Natural Wonders of the World

Name the 7 natural wonders of the world



- Liverpool Street, Marylebone and King's Cross
- District Line
- Leicester Square and Covent Garden

- Park
- Victoria Line or Waterloo & City Line
- Northern Line

- Mount Everest
- Paricutin Volcano
- Victoria Falls

- Aurora Borealis
- Harbor of Rio de Janeiro
- Grand Canyon
- Great Barrier Reef

- Marathon
- Opal Fruit
- Dime
- Chocolate Benas
- Mint Munchies / Mintola
- Rally

Underground

7 Wonders

Originals

10 facts about...

1921-2021



Chocolate



Here are 10 (probably) true facts that you (potentially) didn't know about Chocolate.

1. Ancient Currency - The Aztecs used cocoa beans as currency. They were worth more than gold dust

2. Mental Boost - The smell of chocolate can increase theta brain waves, triggering deep relaxation

3. Chemical Happiness - Chocolate contains compounds like anandamide and serotonin, which can trigger feelings of well-being and happiness



4. Nutella Origins - Nutella was invented in Italy during WWII, when a baker mixed hazelnuts with chocolate to extend his rationed cocoa supply



5. Melting Solution - M&Ms were created in 1941 specifically to allow soldiers to enjoy chocolate without it melting in their hands

6. Accidental Invention - White chocolate was invented in the 1930s by accident, stemming from efforts to find new uses for leftover cocoa butter

7. Immense Production - The world's largest chocolate bar weighed 5,792.5 kilograms (12,770 pounds), produced in the UK



8. "Food of Gods" - The scientific name for the cocoa tree, *Theobroma Cacao*, translates to "food of the gods"



9. Historical Currency - During the Revolutionary War, American soldiers were sometimes paid in chocolate



10. Extensive Production - It takes approximately 400 cocoa beans to create just one pound of chocolate



LORRAINE'S CRAFTS

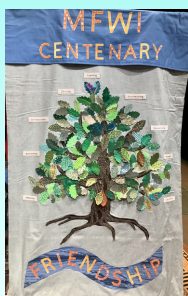
A weekly craft get-together, hosted by Lorraine.

19:30, every Monday

Zoom link

Meeting ID: 8528335 4467

Passcode: 358099



CRAFTY CORNER

When I was at the Spelthorne Group meeting last month, I saw the entries in a competition to raise awareness of the need to tackle the crisis in the National Dental Health system.

Each entrant approached the subject differently. They were really imaginative, all with a great message and beautifully worked. Congratulations to all for getting the message over so well. I never cease to be amazed at the talent we have in our WIs!



Just a reminder that we will be holding a Dabble day on Thursday 11th June –Sashiko stitching blocks. This has been costed at £10.00, but may become cheaper if more people attend on the day. There are spaces available.

Dabble Day

DABBLE DAY

SASHIKO STITCHING BLOCKS



Time

10.00 AM
15.00 PM

Date

Thursday 11th
of June 2026

MFWI County Office
Unit 3, 7 The Green
West Drayton
UB7 7PL

BOOK NOW

With Alison on
craft@mfwi.org.uk

Cost = £10

FUTURE DABBLE DAY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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.

If you have a crafty idea that you would like to help us to try, do please get in touch with us at craft@mfwi.org.uk