



Middlesex News

November 2026

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Chair's Chat

Alison Fremantle

Dear Members,

I hope this letter finds you well and you are coping with the change in weather – we seem to have dashed through autumn and into winter! It's been a fairly busy month for me. I've visited two WIs for their Annual meetings. It's been a great way to meet members, find out what they like about the WI, things they like to do and things they would like to change. Thank you, Clay Hill and Manor Farm, for making me so welcome. I hope to visit more during November.

I also attended the Hertfordshire Annual meeting, which was very enjoyable. They have the advantage of a spacious venue to hold their meetings, so there were lots of sales tables.

Catering Equipment sale

Saturday 14th of November 2026

10:30am until 12:30pm

At the MFWI County Office

There is a wide selection of equipment for cake making and decorating

All proceeds will go to Princess Alice



My favourite was a 'scratch rail' – members donated their unwanted clothing for sale (three rails) at very reasonable prices, all profits going to the federation. Perhaps we would like to do that at our annual meeting?

Another discovery for me was that the federation received a substantial grant from the Denman fund and used it to fund a weekend of activities for their members. How about trying to get a grant for our federation? I really enjoyed the Denman weekends, and I know many other members did too.

I loved Lorraine's temperature tree (Crafty Corner October) – a beautiful depiction of temperature-change for each day of 2025. What patience she had – and yes, very hard work on the hands! Our real trees are changing colour now too, and when it's not raining, I think they are lovely to see when out walking. With best wishes, for November.

Alison



Newsletter deadlines >>> see page 2

WI BIRTHDAYS



Happy Birthday to our WI celebrating
in November

North West London
13 November 2007

Stroud Green
15 November 2011

200+ CLUB

The October draw, the first of the
new competitive year, has been
drawn, with winners receiving an
enhanced prize.

The club is now closed for 2026-27
but keep an eye out for the winners
in every newsletter and do consider
joining in 2027-28.

Best of luck to all who have joined
this year

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

October 2026

1st prize - £80

Katrina Matthews, Pinner Evening

2nd prize - £60

West Drayton WI

3rd prize - £40

Carol Kehoe, Greenford

4th prize - £20

Jacqueline Wilkins, Halliford



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@mfwl.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

- **Dec 2026 issue: 20 Nov**
- **Feb 2027 issue: 22 Jan**
- **Mar 2027 issue: 19 Feb**

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

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



Stanwell Louise Stuart



Another busy month, filled with a great talk, book clubs, race night, croquet and indoor bowls!

We had the pleasure of Brian Greenam visit us to give a talk on the history of P&O. He spoke with enthusiasm and a wealth of knowledge about this extraordinary company. How it started and transformed from a mailing liner to holiday sailings. How they played a role in two world wars as the ships were requisitioned for military service, carrying troops and supplies. Ships and their crews faced the dangers of enemy attack, and many lives were lost. Today's P&O is a far cry from where it started, the ships have got bigger and filled with many ways to entertain yourself. Cruise ships are a destination in themselves, rather than simply a means of transport. The company has lasted nearly two centuries and remains a familiar name in British maritime history.

Our book clubs are going strong with some great books to get people reading out of their usual genre. Croquet has come to an end and was celebrated with an afternoon tea, and indoor bowls started with a great turnout. The race night was a huge success with lots of support from family and friends. We had a wonderful evening, with lots of fun and prizes won by many. What an amazing night had by all.

We are looking forward to some winter walks, indoor bowls, more interesting talks and spending some quality time with our WI ladies.



Sunbury Village Debbie Levy

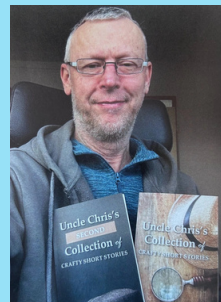


Our September WI meeting was a thoroughly enjoyable and inspiring evening, with members delighted to welcome local author Peter Frost as our guest speaker.

Pete shared the fascinating story behind his books, Uncle Chris's Collection of Crafty Short Stories, a collection of mystery tales packed with clever twists and surprises. As well as providing plenty of entertainment for readers, the book has also helped raise funds for children affected by the war in Ukraine, making it a project with both heart and purpose.

During his talk, Pete explained the inspiration for the stories and gave us an insight into his writing process, from developing ideas to crafting engaging mysteries that keep readers guessing until the very end. Members particularly enjoyed hearing how a lifelong love of storytelling developed into a published book with a charitable aim.

Several members took the opportunity to purchase signed copies of the book, which above all will go to charity.



A huge thank you to Pete for spending the evening with us and sharing his experiences. It was a memorable event that combined fascinating insights, and support for an important cause. We wish Pete every success with his future writing projects.

Public Affairs

Alison Fremantle

Campaigns update: NFWI has produced a resource guide for 'Access to more Public toilets – a guide to campaigning locally'. It's quite useful, reminding us of why we voted for the campaign, a case study, and advice on how members can get involved in their WI groups.

It also has many references for better understanding of the situation. You can download the booklet from MyWI – current campaigns or read it on-line. NFWI would be very interested in hearing how we get on.

Public Affairs

Clare Taylor

The United Nations International Day for Tolerance 2026 is on Monday, 16 November, its thirtieth year. It's an important theme. Intolerance acts like grit in the cogs of society and causes anger and unhappiness.

Our society is very wide-ranging, with multitudes of different beliefs, different traditions, different skills, different ways of thinking and of doing things, as well as different cultural backgrounds. This is a rich tapestry to enjoy and to learn from. Even small things like different ways of knitting or different ways of cooking, different ways of dancing and different types of music – all can enrich us. And what we don't like, we can simply acknowledge and leave to be enjoyed by those who do. Difference is not something to be frightened of, to avoid or force change upon, but something to explore. Just as biodiversity is important in nature, human diversity is important in society.



West Drayton Juliey Humphreys



Happy Birthday to us! This month we had a party since it's not every day you get to celebrate being 107! Despite our advanced years, we've definitely still got what it takes. To ensure we stay that way, Rima Mezal (who leads the chair workouts on VIA) came to show us some moves (very gentle, mostly seated). After all that exertion we obviously needed some nourishment.

As befits a party there were cupcakes courtesy of Kay, our president. You will see in the photos that since it's October our party outfits were pink to show our support for those diagnosed with breast cancer, and their friends and families. Lastly, in a twist to the usual birthday presents, we donated items to local food banks. All in all, it was a lovely birthday.



Stanmore Nila Gosrani



We at Stanmore are doing very interesting activities over the year. Last week we had a laughing yoga therapy session which was enjoyed by almost 45 ladies!

Our other meetings have covered the following topics; skin care and beauty products,

financial planning, the work of a crime scene officer, gardening tips and a hanging basket demonstration, reflexology, a social with a quiz, and Tai Chi.



We held an early Diwali party with food, music and dancing in October.



Southbourne Jackie Head



This month we had a very entertaining talk by Chris Truran, a retired Scenes of Crimes Officer, about the origins of forensic science and botched robberies. We also had a bring and buy food and plant sale. I was a bit late taking a photo so much of the delicious produce, made by our members, had already been sold. Our theme colour was purple this month which was won by Anne Taylor with her beautiful WI lady hanging decoration.

On 16th September a few of us, wearing purple, met up for a picnic in a local park to celebrate the 111th birthday of the WI, it was a really pleasant few of hours.

A couple of days later our craft group had a trip to 'The Mad Hatters Pottery Party' at Flowerland garden centre, where we glazed various items of our choice. It made a lovely change to do something completely different and required a lot of concentration. I think this was the quietest we had been in a long time!



We waited a couple of weeks for the items to be fired but the outcomes were really successful, and we were pleased with our efforts.

We are very lucky to have such a wonderful group of ladies, as members, with a few who travel a bit of a distance to Southbourne's meetings, one person is Christina Ali who also belongs to the book club.

Greenford Trish Quinlan

Three of our ladies along with three friends went over to what was the Peek Freans factory in Bermondsey - an area much changed since PFs origins 150 years ago. Our excellent guide Frank was the Chief Fire Officer for the Company following his military career, so his historical knowledge was endless. The partners began the company dealing mainly on tea and employed over 3000 people, offering medical and sports facilities where top training enabled some to enter the Olympics. The company was later amalgamated with other biscuit producers until its demise. One of their finest moments was producing the late Queens wedding cake in 1947, a copy of which is below. The three rooms of the museum are full of memorabilia covering the history of a great company. The free tea and biscuits were most welcome too.



Bedfont Belles Jenny Hanrahan

We seem to be turning into 'Ladies who lunch'.

We went for very pleasant meal at the General Roy in Feltham which had been recommended by some of our members.

Our October meeting was our A.G.M. which saw our existing committee carrying on with their current responsibilities with many thanks from everyone for their hard work. Thanks, were also given to our ladies who organise the raffles, days out, birthday cards and newsletter entries.



Ruislip Evening Sandy Channon



We welcomed Sonal Hindocha to our October meeting who spoke to us about the origins of henna. Henna comes from the dry leaves of the plant "Lawsonia Inermis" which grows in the hot regions of North Africa and the Middle East, believed to be used in Egypt as a cosmetic, cooling effect, medical purposes and sometimes hair dye over 5,000 years ago. It spread through the Silk Road trade and is now used in many religions and communities as a symbol of joy, luck and community. Mehndi is a beautiful intricate temporary art on hands and feet which has evolved over the centuries and often used at weddings, Eid and Diwali. Sonal drew beautiful designs with the henna paste on a few of our ladies' hands and Lorraine provided temporary "henna tattoos" for those who wished to try out the art. There were many questions for Sonal, and we all enjoyed the talk.

All the money used to vote for our pennies competition, teas and coffees and any donations for plants go towards our charity of the year - Hillingdon Narrow Boats - Our ladies bought in an interesting selection of "Black" items for our pennies competition, Janet won with a "Black" Olympic New Zealand teddy, the prize was a box of Black Magic chocolates! Hazel kindly provided the cake and milk for our teas and there was a nice choice of prizes donated by our ladies for the raffle. Next month we look forward to making Christmas Puddings.



After a sweltering summer we launched into autumn with a variety of meetings and activities from seated Zumba to visiting Eltham Palace. We joined in the nationwide Great UK Water Blitz sampling both the local Dagenham Brook and the River Roding a tributary of the Thames. We were pleased to find the amount of both phosphates and nitrates were low, it's a good citizen science activity which you can do annually to build up a picture of your local river.

We joined Barts Charity Hike for Health to raise funds for our local Macmillan Cancer information and support team. We enjoyed an interesting 10k route taking in a lot of landmarks along the Thames. So far, we have raised over £1,500 which made the aching feet, some of us had, worthwhile.

Exploring the Thames continued with mudlarking on the foreshore by the Millenium Bridge. Some fascinating finds were explained by our knowledgeable and lively guide Sean of The Thames Explorer Trust.



Stone Rangers

Jill Hasler



Our Macmillan Coffee Morning was another chance to raise money, enjoy a chat and drink coffee.

A common theme of all our events and visits is not just exploring issues and places but enjoying socialising and having fun. We have some new members who especially enjoyed the chance to get to know others.

We celebrated Black History month with an informative and entertaining talk from Peter Ashan on the roots of diversity in Waltham Forest. We were surprised by some of the information his research has revealed, and Peter was surprised we did not conform to the stereotype of a WI!

We are gearing up to participate in the 16 days of activism for violence against women and girls. Leading up to Christmas is a good time to raise money for charity so we plan to have a bucket collection to raise more for our local Macmillan team, plus of course enjoy some festive crafting and celebrations. Watch this space to see how we get on.



Hayes Town

Joan Leonard

September's members meeting featured a compelling talk from former Scotland Yard detective, Brian Greenan, exploring the truth behind the legend and posing the ultimate question: 'Who killed Elvis?' October saw us presenting a 'Tickled Pink' topper inside Asda, in support of Breast Cancer Awareness month. A few weeks later we gave a presentation at West Drayton Library on 'The history of the WI'. We were pleased to welcome Alison, our Federation Chair, as that is her local library and the event went very well, with a lively and interactive audience.

During Octobers' members meeting Jodie, from 'Flowers by Zoe', created a beautiful Christmas table decoration, which she generously donated to our raffle.

Wendy, our President, has lately been very busy campaigning against the proposed closure of the ASDA community room. This room has been used for eleven years for our 'Laughs and Crafts with Wendy' sessions and committee meetings. Please support our campaign by signing an online petition. The QR code will take you to Change.org, where you can read the petition details and sign it.



Laleham Chris Walker

Sarah Slater was our speaker at last meeting. Sarah who is a Blue Badge and Hampton Court Palace guide is a favourite of our group and her talk this time - Kirtles, Corsets and Curtains- was up to her usual standard.

Sarah took us through the changes and developments in ladies' fashion and, in particular, undergarments over the centuries. She explained the reasons underwear evolved the way it has - including when and why knickers started being worn! Sarah makes her own costumes one of which she brought to show the various layers involved.



Also here's a photo of some of our members wearing the purple theme for WI day this year



Ashford Evening Deborah Martin



For Ashford's October meeting, we had a return speaker, Meryl White, who took us through the history and evolution of the afternoon tea. As no afternoon tea is complete without scones, members were challenged to bake their favourite scones to see who made the best ones.



Meryl was asked to adjudicate as an impartial judge and congratulated the winner of the Star Baker apron, Debbie Jamieson, who may be asked to supply more baked goods in the future!



The talk was particularly relevant in light of Ashford WIs 42nd birthday celebrations. We had a sumptuous tea catered by the Fordbridge Centre in Ashford which left everyone full of cake and with bags of leftovers to take home.



Apart from the obsession with afternoon tea, the group flew the flag for Ashford WI at a local fun day, adding a good profit for the day's work selling handicrafts and other items.

Preparations are turning towards Christmas now as planning for Ashford's Christmas Fayre ramps up and our crafters work on items to sell. The script reading group is working on its Christmas contribution with a pantomime for the December meeting. While some worry if the play will be ready in time, the response can only be 'Oh, yes, it will!'



Word scramble

Try unscrambling these autumn words

1. KMPUPIN	6. APLPE
2. EAVESL	7. REDC
3. VHAERTS	8. URGOD
4. RAECRWWS	9. AYRHIED
5. CONRA	10. MNUTUA

Search for words

How many words can you make out of "NOVEMBER"

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Autumn Quiz

1. November always ends on the same day of the week as what other month of the year?

2. What day does it swap from Scorpio to Sagittarius zodiac sign?

3. What is November's full moon called?

4. In Northern England what sweet treat is traditionally eaten on Bonfire Night?

5. Hedgehogs hibernate in Autumn, what is a baby hedgehog called?

6. Are pumpkins a fruit or vegetable?

7. Before pumpkins, which vegetable was carved on Halloween?

8. The Anglo-Saxons had their own name for October, meaning 'The fullness of winter' what was that name?

Answers

1. August
2. 21st of November
3. Beaver Moon
4. Parkin
5. Hoglet
6. Fruit
7. Turnips
8. Winteryllith

- Examples:
- No
 - Rob
 - Move
 - Venom
 - Remove
 - Overman

6. Apple
7. Cider
8. Gourd
9. Hayride
10. Autumn

1. Pumpkin
2. Leaves
3. Harvest
4. Scarecrow
5. Acorn

10 facts about...

1921-2021



Cooking



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

1. The Oldest Cookbook -

The world's oldest surviving collection of recipes is the Roman text Apicius, which dates back to the 1st century AD



2. Ancient Origins -

Humans have cooked food over an open fire for over 1 million to 2 million years, a habit that helped shrink human guts and enlarge brains

5. Carrots Used to Be

Purple - Originally, carrots were purple, white, or yellow; the familiar orange variety was cultivated in the 17th century by Dutch farmers to honor the House of Orange



8. Searing Doesn't "Seal in" Juices -

Searing meat does not lock in moisture, but it creates deep flavor and caramelization through the Maillard reaction



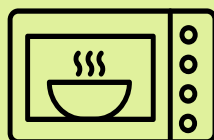
3. Honey Never Spoils -

Archaeologists have found pots of honey inside ancient Egyptian tombs that are more than 3,000 years old and still safe to eat



6. Microwaves Were Accidental -

Engineer Percy Spencer discovered that microwave radiation could heat food in the 1940s after a chocolate bar melted in his pocket near a radar set



9. The Origin of "Salary" -

In ancient Rome, soldiers were sometimes compensated with salt, a valuable commodity crucial for preserving food



4. Cooking Boosts

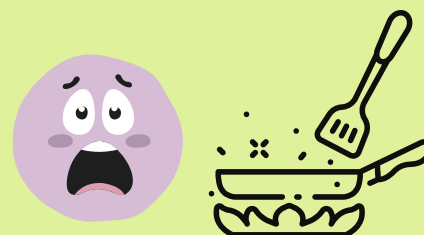
Nutrients - Some vegetables—such as tomatoes and carrots—actually release higher amounts of usable nutrients, like lycopene and beta-carotene, when they are cooked

7. Sharp Knives Change

Taste - Using a dull knife crushes food cells instead of slicing cleanly, which can release extra bitter flavors into your food

10. The Fear of Cooking -

The clinical phobia or extreme fear of cooking is known as "mageirocophobia"



LORRAINE'S CRAFTS

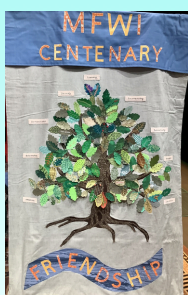
A weekly craft get-together, hosted by Lorraine.

19:30, every Monday

Zoom link

Meeting ID: 8528335 4467

Passcode: 358099



CRAFTY CORNER

Our last Dabble Day of 2026 will be held on Tuesday 1st December, when we will be making hand sewn Christmas decorations. To ensure that the event goes ahead, please book your place by 23rd November. If you leave it till later, I may have cancelled, assuming that nobody is interested.

Cost £5.00

10.30am – 3.30pm

Please bring lunch, tea and coffee is provided

To book contact: craft@mfwi.org.uk



Dabble Day

CHRISTMAS CRAFTING

1st Dec 26



10:30am
until
3:30pm

Join us for a joyful crafting experience filled with festive creativity! Make your own hand sewn Christmas decorations, while sharing the magic of the season.

BOOK A SPACE WITH ALISON ON CRAFT@MFWI.ORG.UK

£5

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