Middlesex News

December 2026



Chair's Chat

Alison Fremantle

Dear Members,





Great news – we will be moving from our present office in the New Year! For a long time, the Board of Trustees has been aware that our present office is not accessible to all members, and this has now been addressed. We are still waiting to receive a contract /confirmation from the managers of the new premises, which are close by, with parking facilities, but we have secured storage for our archives, and we are busy clearing the office of all the clutter we have gathered over the years. I will keep you posted on progress.

Talking of clutter, I had a wonderful shock when I opened up an old wooden-framed screen, that has been stored behind the office door for ages – to discover a beautiful hand embroidered, four panelled, floral design, that the ladies of Ickenham WI (now closed) made in 1932! I have been in conversation with the managers of Ickenham village hall, and I am hoping they will be able to give it a home. I hate throwing things away, and it would be so sad to lose this treasure.

As we near Christmas, we are beginning to get busy with organising the big day. I hope that you manage to find relaxation, enjoyment and peace, and wish you all the best for 2027.

Alison



SAVE THE DATE

5TH OF APRIL 2027

FOR THE

MFWI ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON

Newsletter deadlines >>> see page 2

In Brief

1921-2021

WI BIRTHDAYS



Happy Birthday to our WI celebrating in December

Clay Hill
7 December 1938

WI Lottery

You can support Middlesex Federation by buying WI lottery tickets thhrough 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:

November 2026

1st prize - £40
Sunbury on Thames WI
2nd prize - £30
Sheila Pierce, Greenford
3rd prize - £20
Gill Crossland, Pinner Evening
4th prize - £10
Pamela Kirk, Greenford



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

- **Feb 2027 issue: 22 Jan**
- **Mar 2027 issue: 19 Feb**
- **Apr 2027 issue: 19 Mar**

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.

Around the WIs

1921-2021

Ashford Evening

Deborah Martin

For Ashford WI, the November meeting means the AGM. Having served the maximum term of five years under our constitution, our president Wendy Kislingbury stepped down and Lesley Wheeler was elected to succeed her. Our gratitude goes out to Wendy for all that she has done for our group. November is also a time of remembrance.



This year, Ashford WI purchased two additional silhouette figures with a grant from Spelthorne Council to accompany an outline soldier on Town Tree roundabout. The silhouettes will be a permanent addition to the landscape while an arch of poppies was erected by a small team for Remembrance Day.



Our watering team has worked through the year to keep the flowers around the war memorial thriving and ready for the memorial service. Members joined the march to the memorial, and our new president laid our hand crocheted wreath on behalf of the group.



We've also had excursions away from Ashford, with theatre lovers going to the Theatre Royal Windsor to see ballet. With so much excitement about the Bayeux Tapestry at the British Museum, Ashford members headed instead to Reading to see the Victorian replica on permanent display there. They were impressed with the detail of the embroidery and the history of both 1066 and the Victorian women who made the duplicate tapestry stitched into the wall hanging.

Laleham

Chris Walker

Our October meeting was to celebrate our WIs 91st birthday.
A bit more low key after our 90th celebrations of last year but we still had a lively party and thoroughly enjoyed the event.
We treated ourselves to a lovely fish and chip supper, as well as the traditional birthday cakes of course.
Karen hosted a game of the ever popular "Handbag Bingo"
All finished off by a raffle with lots of lovely prizes! Happy Birthday to us.







Public Affairs

Alison Fremantle

The resolution short list is out, so I hope you have been able to download the briefing notes from MyWI. These will inform your discussions at your group meetings, before voting. The Public Affairs team are holding an open meeting on Wednesday 13th January 2027, at 7:30, on TEAMS, joining details:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/31885997341251 37?p=DCGcm95QB0eBFv8BCv
Meeting ID: 318 859 973 412 513 7
Passcode: XL3so7kM

Where you are invited to join in with discussions about each of the resolutions.
There is a campaign action pack, on Women's homelessness, available from 'MyWI'. If you have difficulty accessing it (or MyWI), email pa@nfwi.org.uk with your request.

Sunbury on Thames

Gerry Attias

Sunbury on Thames WI and Sunbury Village WI laying wreaths on Remembrance Sunday.



West Drayton

Juliet Humphreys

This month our special guest was Sarah Endersby who travelled to West Drayton to oversee our AGM. It was lovely to recall our group's highlights, including the wide range of speakers and the Group Meeting in September.
After the AGM, where the entire committee was re-elected, our (continuing) President, Kay, presented an entertaining and informative quiz entitled 'Which Came First'. Questions ranged from Marmite or Bovril, and Horlicks or Ovaltine, to Oxford University or the Aztec Empire. Some answers were quite surprising: who knew Coca Cola and Pepsi were foisted on the world just seven years apart?



Public Affairs

Juliet Humphreys

World Disability Day - 3rd December

Whilst approximately 3.3 million people in the UK have a visible disability, it is estimated that upwards of 10 million people have a hidden disability. This is a condition which is invisible to others, but which nevertheless seriously impacts a person's daily life. Examples are Autism, Parkinson's, Epilepsy, Diabetes, anxiety, chronic pain…the list goes on.
Some people choose to wear a sunflower lanyard, so strangers know to be aware; to be kind. However, most people with hidden disabilities don't wear one so there's no knowing how they're feeling in a crowded shopping centre or being jostled on a bus or a train.
TFL provides priority seating and badges, free of charge, saying, 'Please offer me a seat.' There is no obligation to explain why. However, I have yet to see anyone wearing one.

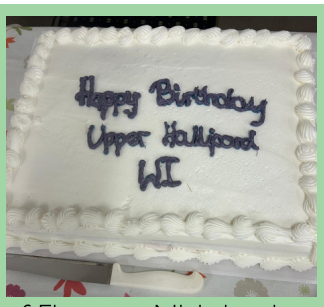


I realised when I was researching this that I would qualify for a sunflower lanyard but really, I'm fine without one, and without people knowing. How many of you and your friends and family are impacted by hidden conditions? On 3rd December spare a thought for all of them, all of us.
https://hdsunflower.com/



Halliford

Liz Davies



We have been busy as usual over the last 4 months. In the sweltering heat of summer, we enjoyed a board game evening and had an enjoyable day trip to Winchester. Some headed for the shops while others enjoyed the many historical sites the city has to offer. The cathedral, castle and working water mill. There was a lovely park with riverside seating and ice cream was enjoyed by many.
September meeting was a very interesting and informative talk on the life and work of Florence Nightingale. More trips were enjoyed, with a return visit to Hotter shoes, who give us good discounts and refreshments. If you get the opportunity to go you won't be disappointed. Also, our intrepid walking group ventured further afield this time to Battersea Power Station and Zoo (they do get about!)
In October we had a wonderful trip to the Poppy Factory in Richmond. We learnt how the Royal wreaths were produced, the meaning behind them (Did you know the significance of the ribbon on the Kings and Queens, represents their horse racing colours!). We also made our own poppies and had delicious cake and a drink in their cafe.



We celebrated our 104th birthday party with cake, fizz and a magician who performed some wonderful closeup tricks. Our president was very nervous putting her hand in the guillotine, luckily, she survived. Our walkers visited Richmond Park where the autumn colours were amazing and a few deer were spotted.
If you'd like to join our group, please don't hesitate to come along you'd be made most welcome and think of the fun you could have.



Around the WIs

1921-2021

Hanwell

Brenda Granshaw

Having produced the annual report for our AGM we realised what interesting and varied evenings we had had over the year. Topics ranged from Perfume to Hedgehogs, also Age UK, how Fascia links all parts of the body and the Missing Post Office.



The highlight of our year had to be our visit to Framfield Allotments. We had a wonderful evening admiring the efforts of the allotment owners.



Then we had a front row seat to watch the solar eclipse while we indulged in scones and bubbles. An evening to remember.

Bedfont Belles

Jenny Hanrahan

Once again, we paid our respects at Bedfont War Memorial. Thanks to Joan who laid the wreath on our behalf.



Happy birthday to us this month!

We celebrated with a fish and chip supper and a very enjoyable quiz (once we understood what we were doing) and again we learned a lot. We just need to remember some of it.







Stanwell

Louise Stuart

It has been another enjoyable year for Stanwell Women's Institute, with members coming together to enjoy friendship, activities and special events.

We had our AGM where we all voted unanimously for our President and welcomed a new committee member Kaye. We reviewed our year and heard reports from our Treasurer, Secretary and President, and many thanks were spoken about for the hard work everyone has put into our WI this year.

We also took part in our Remembrance Day parade, joining others in taking time to remember and honour all those who gave their lives in the service of our country. It was a thoughtful and meaningful occasion, allowing us to show our respect and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many.

We congratulated the Croquet ladies for their efforts this year with a presentation of awards. Book clubs are still going well, and fingers crossed the walking group can meet this month if the weather is on our side!

These events reflect what Stanwell WI is all about: friendship, community spirit and supporting the wider community, while enjoying opportunities to come together.

We look forward to another year of activities, events and friendship within Stanwell Women's Institute.







Twickenham

Christine Fitzgerald



This is the first post about Twickenham WI in a long time. We are a vibrant, friendly group of 20 women who like to share ideas and help each other out when needed. There have been some outstanding talks and events during the year. Here are a few of the more fascinating ones:



In January we learned about Sir Joseph Bazalgette and his inventions. Learning about the 'Great stink' of 1858 in London and the modernising of the sewage system. Also, facts about cholera in Victorian times and the link to water pumps. The speaker Stephen Fielding was from the Habitats and Heritage charity, and he showed us pictures of Crossness pumping station in Abbey Wood, which has amazing ornamental ironwork.



In February we had an interesting talk on Spain's wilderness by one of our members- Francesca. Learning about the history, flora and fauna in the area. We had beautiful pictures and photographs to see on the Donana's National park in Andalusia. Another member Jane cooked delicious Spanish style biscuits with a touch of ginger.

In July we had a stall at St Margaret's summer fair. We sold an array of homemade produce like jams, cakes, quiches and homegrown plants. It was swelteringly hot; however, it was a resounding success, bringing in much needed funding for the group.

In August we took a boat trip from Richmond to Kingston-upon Thames then a meal at Cote overlooking the river. A jolly, memorable day out. In September we celebrated the 111 years since the beginning of the WI in this country. A coffee morning in a Lebanese café with purple being the colours we wore, coordinated with a crafty table decoration and collages created by our members. An interesting talk came from a photographer on 'Travelogues, flowers and events through the lens'. Stunning photographs of animals, flowers and views at Runnymede.

We give charitable donations regularly. One has gone to the Whitton food bank, and we have sent winter clothes for people in Ukraine caught up in the war. We plan to give a donation to 'Off the Record' in Twickenham, a charity supporting young people.

Ruislip Evening

Sandy Channon



Some of our ladies had never made a home-made Christmas pudding; our November meeting gave them the opportunity to make their own one for this year. Lorraine weighed and measured all the ingredients needed and provided the recipe.

Each of our ladies bought their own bowl and spoon to mix and take their pudding home in for steaming or cooking in the oven. Everyone chatted as they mixed their puddings - it was a really fun evening with delicious smells of cinnamon and spices filling the room. Some of our ladies are "feeding" their puddings ready for Christmas, and others have already eaten theirs'!





It was Jackie's birthday and she provided a delicious cake for us to share. Wood was our theme for November, beautiful carved wooden items were brought in, including ducks, cabins, sculptures and folding baskets. The winner was Carol Anne with her wooden collapsing push up toys.





For the past 3 years St. Pauls Church in Ruislip Manor have kindly displayed our poppies, made by all our members, in their church. Mel and Dot draped the poppies over the lectern in remembrance of those who lost their lives in past wars – we will always remember those who sacrificed their lives for us.

We are looking forward to our Christmas meal next week and are making something "crafty" for Christmas at our next meeting. We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

Southbourne

Jackie Head

November is our AGM month. Many thanks to everyone who has worked so hard this year. Also, a big thank you to Angela Bevan who has agreed to be our President again.
A game of Chinese raffle, which is always very popular, was enjoyed after the regulatory admin required by an AGM.



We also had a card and craft sale with items made by our very successful craft group.
Our theme, this month, was the colour white which was won by Sandie Nunn with her very cute squirrel.





I have added a couple of photos of two examples of what members achieve at craft group. There is Angela Bevan with a beautiful framed cross stitch of safari animals and a wonderfully intricate crocheted fairy by Sandie Nunn.





Teddington

Fiona Twitcher

After our AGM, our October speaker was Sally Ann Belward, a retired Falls Clinical Lead Physiotherapist and a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Falls Fighter. In her talk, "Slips, Trips and Broken Hips", she explained why falls happen and how to prevent them, stressing that staying active, strong and healthy, particularly through strength and balance training, helps us avoid them. She also told us what to do if someone falls. Some of the facts were sobering in the UK; an elderly person has a fall every 6.44 seconds. Everyone agreed it was an informative and important evening, and several members have since signed up for exercise classes.





In November, Linda Birch, founder of Brewery Market in Twickenham, spoke to us about women in beer. She traced women's role in brewing over 13,000 years, from prehistoric fermentation to beer goddesses, alewives, queens and modern craft brewers. Women brewers were pushed out of the industry and accused of being witches and demons, but they are now reclaiming their rightful place. Linda brought alcoholic and non-alcoholic beers for members to try.



Our Dental Health Drive collected toothbrushes, toothpaste and mouthwash from members, which we donated to The Hygiene Bank in Sunbury. Members also generously donated coats to the Wrap Up London campaign.

Just for fun

1921-2021

Grinch Name

What is your Grinch name?

Use the first number of your age

1: General 2: The Great 3: Doctor 4: Chief 5: Captain 6: Professor 7: Lil' 8: Lady 9: Supreme

Use the first letter of your first name

A: Grumpy
B: Stinky
C: Cranky
D: Grinchy
E: Rotten
F: Smelly
G: Grouchy
H: Mean
I: Messy
J: Vile
K: Crotchety
L: Wacky
M: Sassy
N: Naughty
O: Grumbly
P: Snarly
Q: Quirky
R: Rude
S: Sneer
T: Whomper
U: Crabby
V: Whiny
W: Nasty
X: X-tra Gumpy
Y: Crusty
Z: Ornery

Use the month you were born

January: McGrump
February: McMeanie
March: VonGrinch
April: Snotworth
May: Fluffpants
June: Snifflebutt
July: Whosniffer
August: Wrinkletoes
September: Grumblestump
October: Sneezlefritz
November: Picklesnout
December: Cranklepop

Guess the price

How much does each of these Christmas items cost from a mid rang UK supermarket

6ft Artificial Christmas tree	£_____
Milk chocolate coins	£_____
50cmX5m wrapping paper	£_____
Gingerbread house kit	£_____
Large whole turkey	£_____
500g Brussels Sprouts	£_____
75cl Mulled Wine Merlot	£_____
Yule Log	£_____

Correct when printing

Finish the lyrics to the Christmas songs

1. Last Christmas, I gave you my heart, But the very next day...
2. Room is swaying, records playing, all the old songs, we love to hear, all I wish that everyday was Christmas...
3. Well I wish it could be Christmas every day, when the kids start singing...
4. I dont need to hang my stocking, there upon the fireplace, santa clause wont make me happy...
5. Its the most beautiful time of the year, lights fill the streets spreading so much cheer, I should be playing in the winter snow, but...

Finish the lyrics

1. You gave it away
2. What a nice way to spend the year
3. and the band begins to play
4. with a toy on Christmas day
5. i'mma be under the mistletoe

Guess the price

1. £25.99
2. £0.89
3. £1.50
4. £7.00
5. £37.45
6. £0.89
7. £6.25
8. £7.00

10 facts about...

1921-2021

Christmas Trees

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

1. German origins - The modern Christmas tree tradition began in 16th-century Germany, where Christians brought decorated trees into their homes



2. First electric lights - Edward Johnson, an assistant to Thomas Edison, created the first electric Christmas tree lights, which he debuted in New York City in December 1882.

3. Martin Luther and lights - The 16th-century Protestant reformer Martin Luther is often credited with adding lighted candles to an evergreen tree to mimic stars shining through the forest.

4. Royal popularity in Britain - While the first British Christmas tree was introduced by Queen Charlotte in 1800, the tradition became widely popular across the UK in the 1840s thanks to Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria

5. Growth timeline - It takes an average of 7 years (and anywhere from 6 to 15 years) for a real Christmas tree to reach a typical retail height

6. Tallest recorded tree - The tallest displayed Christmas tree on record reached 221 feet (about 67 meters) high and was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950

7. First manufactured ornaments - Woolworths sold the first commercially manufactured Christmas tree ornaments starting in 1880

8. The Trafalgar Square gift - Since 1947, the towering Christmas tree in London's Trafalgar Square has been given annually to Britain by the city of Oslo, Norway, as a thank-you for WWII support



9. Oxygen and the environment - One acre of real Christmas trees produces enough daily oxygen for 18 people while absorbing carbon dioxide as they grow

10. Replanting cycle - For every real Christmas tree harvested by farmers, 2 to 3 new seedlings are planted the following spring



Craft

1921-2021

LORRAINE'S CRAFTS

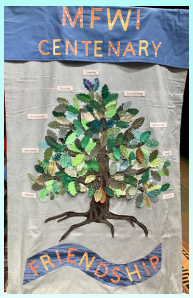
A weekly craft get-together, hosted by Lorraine.

19:30, every Monday

Zoom link

Meeting ID: 8528335 4467

Passcode: 358099



CRAFTY CORNER

Looking back through the Middlesex News, the variety and super standard of your crafts have continued impressively. From giant net sunflowers, Easter bonnets, twiddle muffs and trauma teddies to glass painting, baking and mehndi designs. Many of the crafts we do are for the community, and we can be especially proud of that.

The craft committee, as such, has now folded. However, help and advice can still be accessed through the MFWI as the Middlesex News can be used as an exchange of ideas and techniques – I haven't hung up my craft hat yet. We also think it would be lovely to showcase projects that you individually, or collectively, are proud of. Please send photos of them, labelled with your name, WI and if possible, a little bit of information, e.g. purpose, for inclusion in the Middlesex News.



Dabble Day

1921-2021



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