



*BEDFORDSHIRE  
WI NEWS  
JANUARY 2024*



*Happy New Year!!  
Yes, now that the festivities are over, the decorations are down,  
the fridge has stopped heaving with holiday fare, we are back  
hard at it, looking forward to a busy 2024*

**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN



**Bedfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes**

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**News Articles:** ATC@bedfordshirewis.org.uk

**Web:** www.bedfordshirewis.org.uk

**Facebook :** Bedfordshire County WI

**Opening Hours:** Members are welcome to visit the office between 10.00 to 12.30 and 1.30 to 3pm Monday to Thursday. Office is closed Fridays

**Parking is available at Queen Street Car Park first 2 hours free**

**Secretary:** Catherine Bentley

**Newsletter Editor:** Hazel Wade

**BCFWI** is a Registered Charity: 1029278 and a Ltd Company Registered No: 02708888

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WI Duty Adviser for January 2024

**DOT WIGG**

**MACchair@bedfordshirewis.org.uk**

Please contact the duty adviser with WI related questions.

For anything urgent, please ring WI House on 01234 359538

**200 CLUB November 2023**

No 120 Lynda Joslyn, Aspley Guise & Woburn Sands: £50

**200 CLUB Meets & Entertains 2023**

No128 Ann Newton, Bedford WI: £40  
No.141 Heath & Reach WI : £25

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS:**

**Knit , Sew & Crafters**, WI House, next dates: 17th Jan, 28th Feb 10.30 to 2.30pm, no booking required £3 per person.

**Friday 02 February**, Brick Lane Music Hall, Coach plus Adult Pantomime plus 3 course meal (see p4)

**Monday 26 February** County Quiz, Addison Centre, Bedford Rd, Kempston MK4 PN

**Thursday 29 February** The Higgins & Panacea Museum Tours, Bedford.

**Saturday 09 March** More Fun with Chicken Scratch, WI House

**Saturday 16 March**, Speaker Audition Day, Barton le Cley

**Monday 29 April**, Annual Meeting, Kings House MK42 9AZ with Guest Speaker Esme Young

**Saturday 11 May**, Film Music Gala, Royal Albert Hall

**Thursday 30 May** Winterbourne House & Gardens (see P5)

**Sat/Sun 20/21 July** Bedford River Festival Stall

*Planned—awaiting confirmation:*

- \* Crochet Workshop (with Nicola Furey)
- \* Shoe Sale & Bag Sale Lunch
- \* Big Green Week 08-16 June, activities
- \* BCFWI Walk for Fun. Charity: Bedfordshire Carers
- \* Tiptree Farm & The Cheap Shop, Essex
- \* Jigsaw, Crazy Bag Whist evenings
- \* Meets & Entertains-Autumn
- \* Kurling evening
- \* Shoe Sale & Lunch
- \* Proms Evening
- \* Christmas Craft Fair

**QUIZ WHICH PANTOMIMES?**

1	From what set of stories does the tale of Aladdin originate?
2	In which pantomime do Robin Hood and Maid Marian appear?
3	What is the name of the family cow in Jack and the Beanstalk?
4	In which pantomime would you find the character King Rat?
5	What name is given to the leading man in a pantomime usually played by a woman?
6	In Mother Goose, what is traditionally the name of the goose?
7	In which pantomime does Dandini appear?
8	In Sleeping Beauty how long would the princess sleep?
9	In which pantomime would you hear the phrase 'Fee, Fo, Fi, Fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman'?
10	In Peter Pan what is the name of Captain Hook's side-kick?



## Chair's Chat



Hello! A Happy New Year to all the Members and their friends and family who supported us in 2023 and look forward to receiving that support continue throughout 2024. I hope you all enjoyed the Festive Season and are now looking forward to WI events during the coming year.

Our sub committees and the Board of Trustees meet on a regular basis to discuss the various events. Sometimes these have been suggested by yourselves, or have been researched in the ways available to us these days!



Thank you to all who sent through items for the Tree Festival. We will soon need another house to put all the decorations collected and stored over the years. . . I jest of course!! But to date we have not ever, to my knowledge, thrown anything away. I think that this year we may need to sort out and donate various items to Charity shops ready for them to sell on for Christmas 2024. I hope you will agree that that is the sensible thing to do?

We are to attend the River Festival again in July and plan to reuse the knitted Green, White and Purple knitted "strips and rosettes" that some of you will have knitted previously to decorate the Bandstand. We will also be seeking members to form a rota to help run the stall. More of this in the months to come.

We have been asked if we can arrange events for maybe Saturdays and/or in the evenings. This would enable WIs with younger working members to attend some functions along with other ladies who maybe do the school run etc. for their family. We are of course aware that this could affect numbers at these events. Perhaps you could let us know your thoughts on this issue, just an email to myself or to the office would help the Board with this issue.

So, now the New Year has begun and I look forward to seeing many of you at the various events that I know will take place with the support of all our WIs. Take care of yourselves through what will possibly be the snowy winter months!!

Best Wishes *Elizabeth*

### Annie Palmer

### Climate Ambassador

Last September, whilst sitting on a small ferry boat, I got into conversation with a fellow passenger. I knew the lovely gentleman's brain was in a different league to mine when, on seeing a rainbow, I exclaimed "Oh! That's beautiful!" and he said "The sun is at a (can't recall the number) degree angle to the Earth".

On the train home from Penzance the gentleman happened to be sitting across the way from me. I'd been doing puzzles for a couple of hours and had decided to give up as I was finding the Sudoku ('Easy' category) challenging. A voice cut through my thoughts; "Excuse me, would you like to read my magazine?". I looked across the aisle at the man's smiling face and smiled back, "that would be lovely, thank you". He retrieved a magazine from under his iPad and handed it to me. It was *Physics World*. The topics on the cover included: 'Quantum metal. When the uncertainty principle goes up to 12' and 'Using muons to peer into volcanos'. He looked so pleased that I hadn't the heart to hand the journal back.

The first article, 'Fractional quantum Hall state appears in ultracold atoms', was heavy going. Over the page, the next one had the title: 'Dancing peanuts'. This one sounded much more

up my street. I never knew that when a peanut is dropped into a glass of beer it goes up and down (the nut, not the glass of beer. That would be worrying). A "beer-dancing peanut"! You live and learn. I wonder if a peanut dances in a glass of Prosecco.

Another article was: 'How to think like a scientist' by James Kakalios, Distinguished Physics Professor at UMN. It mentioned climate change and made interesting reading. He said that lives have been transformed and enriched by science scientists therefore find it disturbing that many people distrust or deny scientific evidence on climate change. People's views are often set in stone and they resist any new information that conflicts with their preconceived ideas. Mr Kakalios said that scientists have been trained to be open to new information and to be willing to change their minds. He went on to say that it takes "sustained effort to learn to be your own harshest critic and to admit that something you took to be true is in fact not so". The essence of thinking like a scientist "can be summarised in one single question: What if I'm wrong?". Asking this is all it takes to think scientifically"

(MPs et al. please take note).

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024      SPEAKER AUDITION DAY      Barton le Clay Village Hall**

An opportunity to listen to a variety of speakers and subjects, and to obtain ideas for your WI Programme. It is an opportunity also, for you to decide which speakers are entered into the Speakers Directory. Tickets are £7.00 each and we are now allowing a maximum of 3 members to this event. Representatives from your WI are asked to remain all day at this event, even if there is a change over at lunchtime. Having a representative for only part of the day is unfair on members who could not obtain a ticket. It is recommended that members bring a packed lunch although tea & coffee will be provided.

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### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES Annual Council Meeting Monday April 29<sup>th</sup> 2024**

1.30pm – 4.00pm

Kings House, 245 Amptill Road Bedford MK42 9AZ

### **Our Guest Speaker for the Afternoon is Esme Young**

Esme, of “Sewing Bee Fame” a reality series on BBC2 is Bedford born, bred, and attended school here. So, we hope that being in Bedford will mean as much to her as it does to us to have her to Speak at our ACM.

The Coffee Shop will be available at Kings House, with doors to the meeting opening from 1.00pm

Every WI is invited to send one delegate to the ACM free of charge and observer tickets will be available to members @ £12 each with friends & family @ £14 each.

This should be a popular event. Tickets will be sold on a first come, first served basis so order early!!



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Tickets for both the above events available in the usual way via your WIs,  
and online at [bedfordshirewis.org.uk](http://bedfordshirewis.org.uk)

### **THE COUNTY QUIZ**

At the **Kempston Addison Centre, MK42 8PN**

On **Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024, at 7.30pm**

Yes - It's time to enter your WI team for one of the most exciting and competitive evenings in Bedfordshire! Teams must consist of no more than three members and entry is only £13.00 per team. Of course, WIs may enter more than one team, subject to space, booking priority will be given to one team from each WI. The eight winning teams from the County Quiz will go forward to represent Bedfordshire Federation at the Three County Quiz, taking place later in the year, usually late June. If more than one team from any WI finishes in the top 8, only the top scoring team will be placed in the Final. See Application form for further details. Teams need encouragement so do come along for a fun and informative evening and support your WI Team - Spectators only £3 each!



### **Annual Craft Fair      Flitwick Village Hall      Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November**

Although the Craft Fair proved to be successful, with bacon baps and WI cakes being enjoyed by many of the visitors, it was not the busy place it has been in past years! Fewer WI Members in attendance than usual, although these were supported by “Jo Public” who helped to swell the attendance numbers.

First Prize in the Raffle went to Jackie Fountain, Biggleswade Evening WI

Second Prize went to Janet Carrington, Amptill a non-WI lady.

Other Prizes were won by Cheryl Straughan, Flitton & Greenfield WI; Julie Hayes, Westoning WI; Jennifer Hayes, Kempston Rural WI; Nicola Hulland Cranfield WI ; Gillian Hardy, a soon-to-be new member of Amptill WI !!



### The Higgins & Panacea Museum Tours Thursday February 29<sup>th</sup> 2024



Following our successful tour of the Bunyan Museum last year I have created a package of Tours at the above Museums.

Starting at the Higgins Museum at 11am there will be a guided tour with us possibly being split into two groups. Lunch will be available in The

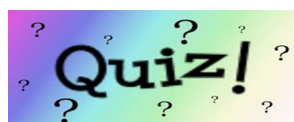
Pantry adjacent to the museum, and will be payable by yourselves on the day. Menus will be circulated in advance for pre-order. After lunch we will cross the road to the Panacea Museum, where again we might be split into two groups for another guided tour. As well as a Coffee shop, there is a small shop for some retail therapy located on site. Both tours will provide an interesting day where we learn a little more about the history of Bedford in two contrasting ways! Lurke Street Car Park MK40 3HZ is only a 5-minute walk away!

**Cost £10 per member & £12 for friends and family.** Application can be made via your WI or online at [bedfordshirewis.org.uk](http://bedfordshirewis.org.uk)

**Closing date for applications is February 15<sup>th</sup> 2024**



Panacea Museum



**Christmas Quiz** Closing date for receipt of completed quiz forms is **Monday January 29<sup>th</sup> 2024**. Results will be in the March Newsletter

[This Photo](#) by Unknown

### ART, SPORT & LEISURE

Rosemary Mitchell

Hello Ladies, on behalf of the Arts, Sport and Leisure Committee, may I wish you a Happy New Year and hope you had a pleasant Christmas and holiday season.

We had our Committee meeting in November to discuss events for 2024.

The Application forms for Winterbourne Gardens are in with the January mailings, the date is Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May, there are three pick-up points, Sandy, Aspects and Flitwick. Let's hope the weather will be good for us to enjoy the House and the Gardens.



We have agreed to hold a Jigsaw Evening, Crazy Bag Whist and **Kurling** as annual events so look out for the dates once we have booked the Halls.



Thank you to the members who did contact us with new ideas which we have discussed and are looking into. Keep the ideas coming or even better, come and join the committee; our next meeting is Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at WI House 10.30am. Hope to meet up with you at any of our events.



Winterbourne House & Gardens

*Rosemary*, on behalf of Arts Sport & Leisure.

### Answers to Quiz on Page

1. The Arabian Nights
2. Babes in the Wood
3. Daisy
4. Dick Whittington
5. Principal Boy
6. Priscilla
7. Cinderella
8. 100 years
9. Jack and the Beanstalk
10. Smee

### FEDERATION FLUTTER (200 CLUB)

Have you remembered to buy your shares? This long held fund raiser for the Federation is open to all WIs and also individual members. Each month there is a prize of £50 to be won and we hold supplementary draws during the year. It is not too late to buy shares for 2024 and we look forward to receiving your subscriptions. Application forms have gone out to your Secretaries and can also be obtained by phoning or emailing the office.



Happy New Year to all of our budding cooks. We hope that you enjoy this as much as members who attended our recent shoe sale & lunch.

Take care. Liz

### PEACH TRIFLE

150g to 200g Amaretti Biscuits.  
3 teaspoons Amaretti or Sherry.  
One Tin Sliced Peaches (drained).  
300 ml Whipping Cream  
150ml to 200ml Plain Greek Yoghurt  
Toasted Almonds for decorating



- ◆ Crush the biscuits and drizzle with the Amaretti or Sherry
- ◆ Place in the bottom of the bowl then add the peaches
- ◆ Lightly whip the cream and stir in the yoghurt
- ◆ Carefully pour over the peaches and level
- ◆ Before serving, sprinkle over the almonds

We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and all very best wishes for the New Year.



### More Fun With Chicken Scratch Saturday 09 March - WI House

For those who attended last year, Jennifer and Rosemary will be taking your skills a little further, making a needle case decorated with chicken scratch. Beginners will also be welcome. They can choose to learn and practise the basic stitches with guidance from our tutors or dive straight in and make the needle case.



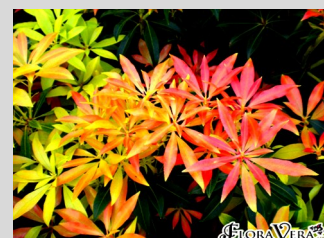
Cost will be £18 for members and £20 for friends and family. Including all materials and instructions. Tea and coffee available. Please bring a light lunch. Application forms have been sent to your WI, but if you would like more information please contact us.

Nicola has also agreed to do another crochet course probably round the end of April.

Also, we are in contact with the Cheap Shop and Wilkins & Sons Ltd Jam Factory in Tiptree and hope to have a visit date arranged very soon.

### NEW YEAR GARDENING

- This can be a difficult time, even for the keenest gardener. However, exciting times are ahead. Early bulbs such as dwarf iris, crocus, pale snowdrops with their sword-like leaves and tiny little daffodils start pushing up through the surface.
- Greenery comes into its own now— lustrous hollies and laurels shine out against the matt but colourful beeches.
- Some showy shrubs that flower now include Daphne Odora, Pieris Japonica Mountain Fire for the acid loving borders and winter flowering Heathers (which will benefit from cutting hard back after flowering).
- Prune late flowering clematis reducing last years growth to strong buds just above the base.
- Cut back autumn fruiting raspberries to the ground and prune blueberries, fruiting currants & gooseberries.
- Check tree stakes & shrub ties.
- Tidy & organise the potting shed.
- Plan & order supplies for coming season.





### MAULDEN WI'S SEPTEMBER SPONSORED WALK - WE DID IT!!!!!!

A team of 12 walkers from **Maulden WI** committed to walking a combined target of 30 miles per day, every day throughout September. A donation page was set up through JustGiving, our target was to walk 900 miles. We hoped to raise in the region of £900 for Tibbs Dementia Foundation, a Bedford based charity supporting both people with dementia and their families. Well, we were thrilled to exceed both targets, in fact the team walked a total of 1370 miles and to date, the challenge has raised £1,283 plus gift aid of £274.46, totaling £1,557.92 so far. This was our first sponsored walk in recent times and we have been delighted with the success, it's been a great joint WI and community effort. The



CEO of Tibbs Dementia Foundation was invited to our October meeting. We have forthcoming on Saturday 03 February, our "Great Swishing Event" (see back page).

**Wilstead** celebrated their 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday in October with Freddie's Barnet coming to entertain us with sea shanties and other songs connected to the sea. They were excellent. They supplied song sheets so everyone could join in with the choruses and all the members had their toes tapping, or they swayed along to the music. A small cake was ceremonially cut, but boxes had previously been prepared, containing a slice of another cake for each member to take home. In November our speaker, Andy Harding, was introduced. He talked about the life of moths of an English Country Garden and showed photographs of many species. He was very knowledgeable and interesting. Members learnt the difference between moths and butterflies and how many species of moth there are. He explained that some of the brighter coloured moths are distasteful to birds that might otherwise try to eat them. Others have very clever camouflage to help them.

Some members of **Pavenham** recently went on a John Bunyan Community Boat trip along the River Great Ouse. The organisation, run by volunteers, operates out of Priory Country Park and our trip went to Kempston and back. The trip was a great success and it was intriguing to see familiar sights within Bedford from a different perspective. The guest speaker at our October meeting was Dennis East. He has just stopped running a bed and breakfast in Scotland and now composes his own poems, many of which are autobiographical. His writing style is similar to Pam Ayres and he proved to be one of our best speakers ever. Our audience really appreciated his sense of humour and roared with laughter. He was extremely funny and we hope to book him again in the future.

Mary Vincent gave a very interesting talk to **Northill & Ickwell** about how she came to start the gin distillery in her parent's farmhouse kitchen and when she had outgrown the kitchen, she moved to a unit at Franklin's Farm in Thorncote Green, Bedfordshire. She also informed us how the distillery of gin works. Mary gave those members and guests wanting to try the gin a small measure and then talked about the history of gin. At the end of her talk, she presented a quiz whereby we had to identify certain herbs and spices that go into the gin, with the winners receiving a prize. It was a most enjoyable evening and Mary was a very good speaker.



Two Shetland Ponies, Pickles and Charlie, came to **Wharley End's** June Meeting! Their owner Lindsey Head, accompanied by her full time assistant Sara, gave a very interesting talk on the role of therapy ponies and how her business had started. She now has 7 rescue ponies, each with a distinctive personality of their own and she explained what was entailed in their care and training. They visit Schools, Care Homes and Hospitals and bring benefits to people of all ages who are suffering disabilities and ill health. Lindsey's talk was thought provoking and at



times very moving, but also contained many humorous anecdotes. It was lovely that at the end of the presentation, members had the opportunity of stroking the ponies and taking pictures.

The speaker at **Keysoe's** October's joint meeting with **Pertenhall & Kimbolton WIs** was Chris Bylett, a ventriloquist. Chris talked about the history of ventriloquism & well-known ventriloquists. He explained how he himself had become interested in ventriloquism as a child but that it was only through a change of circumstance at work that his career as a ventriloquist had taken off in the entertainment industry. Chris is also an accomplished singer so he was able to combine both skills during the evening. His interaction with his puppet which involved lots of jokes had us all laughing. This was a very enjoyable and interesting evening & we would recommend him to other WIs.

Cont/ .....

A busy few months in **Clifton**! We celebrated our 101st birthday with prosecco and a special cake which our lovely Iris cut for us! We were then treated to a fantastic insight into the world of fashion by our speaker Amanda Sutherland. She proved to be both an interesting and innovative designer. Amanda worked from her teenage years and beyond to learn everything she could about every aspect of design; sourcing materials as well as recycling. We had the opportunity to buy a range of gifts, each item designed and made by Amanda in her studio. We followed our monthly meeting with a coffee morning where we caught up with all the gossip following the busy November celebrations and enjoyed the opportunity to win a prize on the raffle and tombola, buy a book, or pick up a few Christmas cards or wrap.

We then had an inspirational talk about Squadron Leader Victor Ekins who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his remarkable achievements as a twenty year old man during his 59 days of the Battle of Britain. David Duker, enthralled us by talking through Victor's exploits and explained which part of his war journey Victor described as 'blissful'. David shared how he uses the values of these wartime pilots in his work with young people to help them through the challenges of today. Many of us were so excited by David's talk we purchased his book, One of Our Own, to help fund his work with young people.

Later in the month a group of our ladies took a trip to Milton Keynes Theatre to watch The Calendar Girls! We had a really lovely time and enjoyed some reminiscing about a Bedfordshire Calendar Girls photograph competition where Clifton came 2nd for a photograph involving the school piano! Does anyone else remember? After the busy November celebrations, we met up for coffee and enjoyed the opportunity to win a raffle or tombola prize, buy a book or pick up a few Christmas cards or wrap.

At **Houghton Conquest** our speakers for September had travelled from Abingdon Oxford. Husband and wife team, Karen and Bret Wiles. We learned all about the effect the WW2 had on children. Shortage of food and clothing and rationing and evacuation. They used a PowerPoint presentation and also brought with them a wonderful display of interesting things. A wonderful evening of memories.



And at our meeting in October, we were treated to an inspiring talk by Paul Gillions. He is a volunteer who works for the RNLI and he told us that the organisation will be 200 years old next year. It was set up as a charity and run by volunteers that hasn't changed in all that time, and relies on donations, and the boats used now can cost millions. He then explained

about the people who go to sea to save lives, and showed us several videos of rescues. Some of us felt decidedly queasy watching these films. It was certainly a very good talk and some said it was the best we have had.



In October **Carlton and Chellington** held a 'Harvest Celebration' with a delicious supper platter with meats and cheeses followed by homemade apple puddings. It was all enjoyed on tables beautifully decorated with scarecrows made by our crafty members.



### MAULDEN WI - MAULDEN VILLAGE HALL - SATURDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2024

Join us at our **Great Swishing Event**... What is Swishing – It's like shopping but it's free.

Good for the planet and good for your pocket.

**9.00 - 10.30 am** Bring along your donations of clothing. Items in good and clean condition please. We give you a token for each item accepted – Maximum 10 tokens per person.

**10.30 - 11.00 am** While we finish sorting and displaying the items, you can enjoy a cup of tea.

**11.00 - 1.00 pm** Doors open and the Swishing begins. Armed with your tickets, take a good look round, select the items of your choice and swap them for your tickets.

So now is the time to sort out your wardrobe and save your items ready bring them along. We will NOT be accepting – underwear, swimwear, nightwear, or sock/tights.

For those unable to donate items it will be possible to purchase up to 5 tokens at the door at £1 each. Donate your items and go home with a refreshed wardrobe!

**Contact us at [MauldenWI@gmail.com](mailto:MauldenWI@gmail.com) or See us on Facebook (Maulden WI)**

