



BEDFORDSHIRE WI NEWS MAY 2024



Hello and a big welcome to the May newsletter. As mentioned in the April Issue, Maulden WI quiz team won the Bedfordshire leg of the Three Counties Quiz. Sorry we did not have this excellent pic of them being presented with the Winners' Shield by Federation Chairman Elizabeth Cochrane to hand before the issue went to press. Very best of luck to Maulden & the 7 other Bedfordshire teams who qualified for the Final, to be held in Buckingham on Thursday 25th June.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



Bedfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes

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Opening Hours: Members are welcome to visit the office between 10.00 to 12.30 and 1.30 to 3pm Monday & Wednesday. Office is closed Tuesday, Thursday & Friday.

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

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WI Duty Adviser for May 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

FEDERATION FLUTTER

May 2024

No: 133

Amphill WI : £50

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

Knit , Sew & Crafters, WI House, (call office for future dates)

10.30 to 2.30pm, no booking required £3 per person.

Saturday 18 May Beginner's Crochet Workshop, WI House

Thursday 30 May Winterbourne House & Gardens

Big Green Week 08 -16 June

Sunday 09 June BCFWI Charity Walk, Priory Park, Bedford. To support: Carers in Bedfordshire, See P4

Tuesday 11 June Kurling, Brickhill Community Centre

Thursday 20 June 'Makes' day at WI House, see back page

Friday 05 July Wine Tasting & Supper, Westoning VH

Thursday 11 July Ladies' Day Newmarket Races

Sat/Sun 20/21 July Bedford River Festival Stand

Friday 16 August Tiptree Farm & The Cheap Shop Essex

Monday 09 September Fishers Gin Tour - Aldeburgh

Tuesday 24 September Crazy Bag Whist, Gravenhurst

Saturday 28 September Proms Evening, Kings House

Monday 14 October Jigsaw Challenge, Kempston

Wednesday 16 October Meets & Entertains, Houghton

Conquest VH, Songs of Nostalgia with Steve Forward

Thursday 05 December John Rutter (Matinee) RAH

Planned—awaiting confirmation:

- * Shoe Sale & Lunch - Autumn
- * Meets & Entertains - Autumn
- * Visit To City London - Murray Craig Guide
- * Speaker Audition Day - Autumn
- * Christmas Sing Along
- * Christmas Craft Fair
- * Blenheim at Christmas
- * Christmas Tree Festival, St. Paul's Church

QUIZ for MAY

1	What holiday is celebrated around the world on the 1st of May?
2	What is someone's star sign if they're born on the 2nd of May?
3	Every May, thousands of tourists visit the Keukenhof gardens in the Netherlands to see colourful fields of which kind of flower?
4	Which American city would you travel to if you were invited to the Met Gala on the first Monday of May?
5	Complete the saying: 'April showers bring May...'
6	May is named after the Ancient Greek Goddess Maia, who embodied the concept of: Spring; Flowers; Growth; Birth?
7	What is the birthstone for May?
8	Every May, music lovers tune in to the Eurovision Song Contest. Which of the following countries does not compete in the competition? Israel; Australia; Liechtenstein; Georgia
9	How does the town of Stilton in England celebrate May Day each year?
10	True or False? May is the only month that will never begin and end on the same day of the week as any other month.



Hello Everyone ,
Doesn't time fly, as soon as one newsletter is published, it seems we commence writing another one!! Do hope you all enjoyed the Easter weekend? We have just come back from Spain and the weather there was not that good, although it was lovely to get away and be in a different environment, with no cooking or cleaning etc. It was also interesting to see how they celebrate Easter, particularly from the religious aspect! We saw three or four parades



where they carry huge effigies of Christ in various positions with the cross, and followed by the congregation of the church carrying palm leaves. These started on Palm Sunday and continued throughout the following week. The figures were carried by probably thirty men and women, they were extremely heavy. I suppose we used to do a similar thing on the Whitsun Walks!!



Easter is traditionally the time to start with the gardening again, so the lawn has had its first haircut!! with a general tidy up all round. Lots more to do though over the coming weeks.

As I write, I am really looking forward to our ACM this April with our special Guest Esme Young and seeing so many members gathered in the Hall at Kings House and imagining how wonderful the singing of Jerusalem is going to be!!! My best wishes to you all, Elizabeth

**BCFWI Board of Trustees
St Pauls Bedford Tree Festival**

The theme for this year's festival is "The Magic of Christmas".

Each year when you support us in our endeavours to decorate the tree, we bring back to WI House, following the event, all that you have made and then decorate the Members' Christmas Tree. It then all goes into storage ... can you imagine how many of your beautiful offerings are contained in the Attic!!!

This year a different idea . . . We are asking you to make "Santas" in any medium; they can be knitted, crocheted, felt, sewn, origami etc. The one issue to be aware of is size, no taller or wider than 10cm, and as light as possible. This is because of the weight on the tree branches!!



Following the tree festival, we thought of giving the Santa's to charity or the wards at the hospital or such like. I hope this will meet with

MESSAGE TO TREASURERS

A kindly reminder that NFWI HQ require their fees from the Federation by the end of May. So would you please collect in your members' fees and send the Federation fees to WI House as soon as you can. Even if there are some outstanding, please send in what you have collected so far before the end of May. Many thanks. Diane Sanbrook

The **2025 WI Diaries** are now available to order at a cost of £7.00 each. The diaries will be purple and this year we are offering a matching pen for an additional £2. It's vital that all orders are submitted to WI House by **Friday 31st May 2024 at the latest**. We will be unable to fulfil orders received after this date.

Message From The Office About Event Bookings

Please be aware that when we receive a phone call asking us to reserve a place with "form to follow", this is taken and handled as an actual booking and so becomes subject to our usual refund policy. We are unable to take reservations that then turn out to not be wanted.

THE WOMENS INSTITUTE BULB CATALOGUE 2024

In the March mailing we enclosed copies of the 2024 bulb catalogue which we hope you will look through and order your next year's spring and summer bulbs. Friends and family may also like to order some for themselves.

The WI share of the bulb sales forms a very valuable income for the Federation which we are always grateful to receive. Please return your orders to the bulb co-ordinator of your Institute, who should then send them on to WI House by the closing date of **31st May 2024**. The bulbs will be delivered early September directly to the co-ordinator at your Institute & confirmation of this date will be advised nearer the time. Thank you!



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sunday 9th June 2024 Annual Walk for Fun & Charity 10.30 am
Priory Park, Bedford MK41 9DJ

The Charity we are supporting this year is “Carers in Bedfordshire” so I hope you are all sourcing your sponsors and getting fit to join us at the above event. Look out for the check-in point at the WI stand on the green space alongside the Cloverdale Retreat café & info point, facing the lake and close to the car park. Please check-in before setting out on your walk and remember to check-in again on your return! You can walk around the lake as many times as you are able. The area is also dog friendly!



Saturday September 28th 2024 “A Night at the Proms”

Kings House, Amptill Road MK 42 9AZ 7.00pm Doors open 6.30pm

Following on from the very successful event last year we are pleased to announce that Bedford Concert Brass and Amici Ladies Choir are to join us again for this special occasion!

We will be entertained by them both to a “Musical Journey around the World” together with

Traditional Proms music. So red, white and blue is the order of the day, flags to the fore!! Join the Trustees, with your Friends and Family at this very exciting event for Bedfordshire Federation. The Bar & Café area will be open prior to the concert and

during the interval for purchase of refreshments.

Cost is £25 per person - closing date for applications is Friday August 30th 2024

Wednesday October 16th 2024 MEETS & ENTERTAINS Steve with “ Songs of Nostalgia”
Houghton Conquest Village Hall, MK45 3LH Doors open 2pm
for 2.30pm start

Come and join us for an afternoon of music to maybe jog the memory and/or sing along, together with enjoying tea & scones with members and friends.

Cost is £12.50 per person Closing date is Friday August 30th 2024



Annie Palmer

anniepalmer@hotmail.com

Climate Ambassador

Isn't it lovely to be woken in the mornings by birdsong and sunlight rather than an alarm going off in the darkness! Since March, the house sparrows have been scratching about in the eaves of my house, busily sorting out their old nests. Some of my cheeky little squatters are now sitting on eggs. They pair for life, although the occasional 'fling' isn't out of the question, and they usually use the same nest site. These birds are believed to bring blessings and happiness to a household so I'm delighted that they have taken up residence under my guttering and tiles!

Most modern houses don't have the nooks and crannies in which house sparrows can make a nest and raise their chicks. These birds, like many other species, are in trouble, so putting up two or three wooden nest boxes high up on your house wall would really help them. The advice is to avoid placing boxes in direct sunlight and to put them in a quieter position (not above a well-used path or door).



House sparrows will eat most types of food put out in gardens; they certainly aren't fussy eaters. However, during the breeding season, they need to feed their young with juicy insects and bugs such as aphids and caterpillars. This is one reason why we shouldn't be using pesticides, particularly insecticides (it's in the name), in our gardens. The use of these chemicals (which are extremely hazardous to our health) and the loss of wildlife habitats to development are the main drivers of bird population declines. Using pesticides in our gardens is causing their numbers to decline even more – if everyone stopped applying insecticides, fungicides and weedkillers it would give our beautiful feathered friends a chance to survive, to increase in numbers and to thrive.

Great Big Green Week 8th to 16th June 2024

Just a reminder that we support this nationwide venture and repeat the website from where your WI can glean some truly inspiring ideas:

<https://greatbiggreenweek.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GBGW-2024-A-Z-of-ideas.pdf>



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I spoke last month about a Banner for you to be involved in, but the finer details have not yet been sorted, due to my holiday!!! It will hopefully be all in hand for next month.

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As I write, the Public Affairs committee have a meeting coming up in the next couple of weeks and a suggestion is for us to organise some Speaker events to have a contrast with the coach trips and the more active events that are already in hand. "Watch this space for Autumn Events".

Friday July 5th 2024 Wine tasting & Supper Event
Westoning Village Hall 7.00pm for 7.30pm

As I write this for the May Newsletter, places are becoming limited, so a need to get your request in quickly! In a convivial atmosphere we will enjoy a tasty supper matched with the wines provided by our Sommelier Nigel. This year the wines are from South Africa. **Cost is £27 per person.** Places booked via your WI Secretary or at bedfordshirewis.org.uk

Elizabeth

**ART, SPORT & LEISURE****Rosemary Mitchell**

As you read your April WI News, Easter will be behind us and we are now looking forward to the summer. Application forms went out in last month's mailings for these two outings: **Thursday 11th July, Newmarket Races for Ladies Day**, a day for fancy hats & posh frocks if you'd like, and to bring along our partners. For further info please visit the jockey club Newmarket : <https://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk/Newmarket>
Cost £58 per person



The other outing is on **Monday 9th September**, a trip to **Fishers Gin Distillery in Aldeburgh Suffolk**. A 1½ hour tour will include a brief history of the distillery, a hands-on demonstration with botanicals, and then a well deserved tasting of Gin cocktails! We have booked 2 tours, the first at **1pm** with the second at **3pm**. A maximum number for each tour is 18 so it's first come first served. Aldeburgh itself is within walking distance of the distillery, located just above the beach. This offers plenty to do for when not on a tour. Nearby are shops and fish and chip eateries. The Brundell Hotel next door offers a selection of lunches and afternoon teas. The remaining seats on the coach are being offered to those who can't get on the tours or just fancy a day out at the seaside!
Cost £65.00 including distillery tour. Coach only is £30. Closing date Monday 22nd July

We have our trip to **Winterbourne House & Gardens on 30th May**, and look forward to seeing some pics of this event!

We are pleased to announce the **Jigsaw Evening** is now booked at **Kempston Constitutional Hall on Monday 14th October**; we are offering a light supper as usual. More details to follow.

And for those of you who like a bit of fun and exercise there's **Kurling at Brickhill Community Centre on 11th June**.



There is also **Crazy Bag Whist** at **Gravenhurst Village Hall on 24 September**. And to round off this busy section is our coach trip to **John Rutter** at the **Albert Hall**, on **Thursday 05 December**, for which this year, we have managed to obtain matinee tickets! Coach & pricing detail to follow.

We hope to see you somewhere at some of these events, in the meantime, have a good month,
 Rosemary

RECIPE **CHOCOLATE & RASBERRY BROWNIES****Ingredients**

250g dark chocolate, broken up
 250g salted butter
 300g golden caster sugar
 3 large eggs
 80g plain flour
 Half a teaspoon baking powder
 Half a teaspoon salt
 400g cocoa powder
 100g milk chocolate cut into chunks
 80g raspberries
 50g raspberry jam

Required: 24 x 24 cm baking pan, lined
 Preheat the oven 170° Fan



Melt the dark chocolate in short bursts in the microwave, stirring each time.
 Beat the butter and sugar together until creamy, add the eggs. Beat for a few minutes.
 Fold in the melted chocolate, then the flour, baking powder, salt and cocoa powder, mix well.
 Add the milk chocolate chunks and raspberries.
 Pour into lined tin and spread evenly. Before you put into the oven swirl the raspberry jam through.
 Bake for 30 minutes; it will still be a little sticky when you put a skewer in.
 Cool completely before cutting. I usually put in the fridge for a short time before I cut up.

CROCHET DAY SATURDAY 18th MAY: * FULLY BOOKED*

At the time of writing we are pleased to report all places on this course by Nicola Furey have been snapped up. But if you want to check if any spaces have since arisen, please ring the office.

Tiptree Jam Factory and The Cheap Shop, Friday 16 August: *FULLY BOOKED*

I'd originally written "Just a small reminder that this trip is filling up fast" but we are pleased to say that this event too has now **sold out**. Please contact the office to check if there is a waiting list.
 Here are the info details <https://www.tiptree.com> & sales@thecheapshoptiptree.co.uk

We are pleased this event proved as popular as expected, but disappointed the attendee list does not include anyone from the Dunstable/Luton end of the county. So we anticipate dropping that pick up & reverting to Flitwick, Bedford & Biggleswade. Updated pick up times will be confirmed nearer the date.

EVE'S TROPHY: The committee agreed on 4 groups: Cookery: (1) A Gluten Free Item (recipe to follow); (2) A jar of Lemon Curd; Craft: Knitted Gloves and Hat (any size) and Gardening: A dried winter arrangement in a teacup & saucer. Fuller details to follow in next issue.

GARDENING for MAY

- ◇ Start routinely weeding with a hoe or hand fork. Weeds become a real nuisance unless regularly removed. A good mulch and ground cover plants help keep them at bay.
- ◇ Plant clumps of perennials for max effect. 3, 5 or 7 plants of any one type are more effective than 20 single or individual plants.
- ◇ Before borders fill with summer foliage, take a note of gaps to be filled in the spring bulb borders or tubs.
- ◇ Once bulbs are over, fill the borders with summer bedding plants which are generally cheap & plentiful at garden centres if you don't start yours from seed.
- ◇ To avoid pests & diseases becoming problematic, try controlling with non chemical methods; there are many available.



Pic: Ed's own WI bulbs

Answers to Quiz on Page 2

1. Labour Day
2. Taurus
3. Tulips
4. New York
5. Flowers
6. Growth
7. Emerald
8. Liechtenstein
9. Cheese Rolling Contest
10. True

Wilstead suffered a run of bad luck when both their first and second choice speakers cancelled at short notice. Thankfully, Robert Brewer was available and turned up on the night! He was an interesting and amusing speaker, whose subject was 'Life in Retirement as a TV and Film Extra'. After retiring from a career in Thames Valley Police, Robert wanted to do something interesting. He walked the trail to Machu Picchu with his wife and also wrote a book. Whilst in the library one day, he saw an advertisement for film extras, so he decided to apply. In his talk, he told us about the path this took him on. There were auditions and interviews, time spent in 'Make-up and Costume', filming at Cardington, Pinewood and Grantchester and taking part in many films and television shows. He also told us about how 'Rhubarb and Custard' is used in films!

At **Houghton Conquest** it was Annual Meeting time, attended by 19 members, Diane Sanbrook was the visiting WI Adviser. After the business of the evening, which went smoothly despite both the President and Secretary being indisposed, an auction of items brought in by members was held to boost funds.

At **Wharley End's** March meeting, Jan Long gave a talk entitled "The Trials & Tribulations of being a Church Warden" of St Mary's, Bromesberrow, Gloucestershire. Her presentation was informative and witty, relaying anecdotes of her fundraising escapades for the restoration of the church, including the removal of bats from the belfry. In her capacity as Church Warden and with the authority she held, she told many humorous tales of issues she'd had to deal with. Jan's presentation, which included many lovely slides, provided a very enjoyable and well recommended talk for us.

Kempston Central enjoyed a talk by Jo Cowan from Magnetic Wellness Magnetic Jewellery. She explained how magnets can relieve the symptoms of several medical conditions. The magnets are incorporated into a variety of pieces of attractive jewellery. A number of members made purchases.

Keysoe's speaker at in March was Deborah Evans, an "ambassador" for Tropic skincare. Tropic's unique selling point is that their products are "clean, green & non-toxic" & are made in the UK. They contain only natural ingredients & preservatives & smell sublime. Deborah was an engaging speaker explaining the importance of a good skin care regime, especially exfoliation & hydration. One of our members gallantly volunteered to have a facial & we were all encouraged to sample the products after her talk with several of us making purchases. Tropic also have very good eco credentials & support several charities such as United World Schools.



Wootton had a colourful evening with Jackie's Mobile Boutique attending. Jackie demonstrated how to pack a capsule wardrobe in a hand luggage size suitcase that would cover a week long holiday. We were then treated to some brave members modelling an outfit each, catwalk style, before members could browse and purchase items they liked the look of. The competition was for our favourite wedding hat, also modelled by participants, and won by Kath Clark.



Biggleswade held their AGM on Monday 18th March 2024. Sally Ball was the guest and she gave a short talk on forthcoming events from County. The speaker was Charles Garland who has worked as a script writer for Dad's Army, a very entertaining speaker, enjoyed by everyone.



Linslade Larks celebrated Easter in style with a very colourful array of uniquely decorated Easter hats, which everyone paraded beautifully on the catwalk. We then set our creative skills into action and all decorated and embellished Eggs. This was followed by a morning tea of jam and cream scones, jam and lemon tarts and a beautiful Easter cake, all homemade by members, finally we tested our knowledge with an Easter quiz. The hats and Eggs were judged and winners chosen. The Hat winners were (right to left) 1st Pat; 2nd Nora; 3rd Janine and 4th Linda. The eggs winners

were, Corinne (a visitor) 1st; Teresa 2nd and joint 3rd; Lesley and Andrina. We completed our Easter celebration morning with a rousing chorus of "In your Easter Bonnet" A really fun meeting was enjoyed by all.

Cont/.....

Northill & Ickwell's Annual Meeting was attended by Dot Wigg, who spoke about the rising costs of transport for trips organised by the Federation, and also mentioned that the future of WI House is under consideration. We then had a quiz which had been organised by one of our committee members. We enjoyed a glass of Prosecco and had nibbles whilst attempting to answer the various questions.

Wymington & Podington report on a busy 2024 so far. January was their annual Fish & Chip supper followed by a splendid Quiz set by Vice President Stephanie. February brought a visit from Donna, site manager for the land agents for Rushden Lakes Development. She was most inspiring and full of information on what her job involves including complex recycling challenges and insights as to how groups can tap into their community schemes; Donna was followed by Matthew from Chester House, the fantastic development built up around very important Roman remains. March's speaker was Ewan Willison, with his hugely entertaining talk about life in the auction rooms. The lunch club has eaten out at Sharnbrook & Carlton with the next to be at Wollaston. Attached is a pic of their Walking Group kicking off 2024 season with a stroll around Olney, including a splendid visit to the historic church, organised by Tracey, the walk leader.

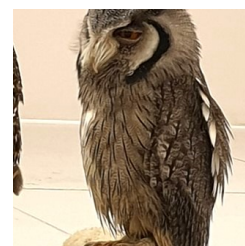
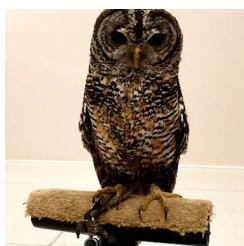


In addition, **Wymington & Podington** are hosting their local Group meeting on 12th June at John White Golf Club Rushden NN10 0SA, doors open 7.30pm, with what's expected to be a very entertaining talk by Steve Pateman, the actual Charlie Price depicted in Kinky Boots, the film & stage show production. Entry for all £5.00 each. Gents/husbands/partners, together with Members & friends from other WIs warmly welcomed but for catering purposes please notify Group Convenor: Anne Brown annebrown23@btinternet.com

This month **Caldecote** had a funny and informative talk from Bex who owns the Pictures of Lily tattoo and piercing studio in Biggleswade. We heard about the history and myths surrounding both, did you know it is possible to have a tattooed wedding ring rather than a real one? And that Julius Caesar had a nipple piercing to symbolise his bravery! Members present didn't confess to anything other than ear piercing, but you never know!

After official business was completed **Tilsworth & Stanbridge** still managed to do some fun things including a number of games of Beetle Drive. Who would know that WI ladies could be so competitive. . . But yes we are! A wonderful evening enjoyed by all.

On Wednesday the 10th we also had the WI group meeting, there are 7 WIs in our region, we all get together once a year for a meeting. We had Sue Mitchell from Birds of Bray talking, Sue bought some different birds this time, we had a Dark Breasted Barn owl called Twix who is 7 years old. together with Elmo aged 5, Smirnoff aged 9 and Yoda aged 7. Sue was telling us about various aspects of birds of prey and the falconers that look after them, together with the legal aspects of keeping / breeding these birds. They really are beautiful and incredibly intelligent creatures. At the end of her talk, Sue then went and got Tufty out of her car, Tufty is an Eagle Owl with an extremely large wingspan!! Again a beautiful bird. As you can see from the pictures, we also had the opportunity to hold one of the birds, Doreen our president pictured here with one. If you would like to know more, or have Sue do a talk for you, give her a call on 07776213548.



Scrapbook Challenge: Do remember to take pics of your activities every month and jot down info to accompany them for your WI Scrapbook!

POSTPONED: Training Day, 15th June: Barton VH. Unfortunately due to an insufficient take up of places, we are postponing this event for the time being.

RIVER FESTIVAL 20TH & 21ST JULY: We are asking members to make sunflowers and blue butterflies in any medium to be delivered to WI House by Thursday 29th June latest. So please do get making! And we also still have the making day/social 20th June.

Sunflower & Butterfly Making Day on 20th June, 10am-3pm at WI House: As mentioned, we have a get-together on Thursday 20th June for members to pop in and make sunflowers and butterflies. We should have plenty of yarn and copies of patterns available. Please bring your knitting needles or crochet hooks or other crafting items together with a packed lunch! Tea and coffee will be provided.

We've been very disappointed at the lack of response to our request for members to help on the WI stand. It's a chance to meet visitors to the River Festival and maybe recruit a few more members! Information is with your secretary.