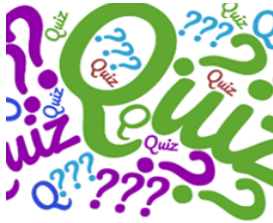




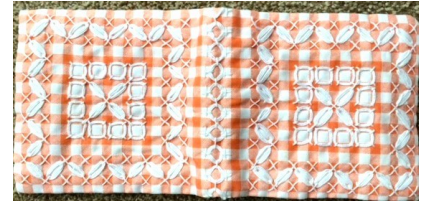
*BEDFORDSHIRE  
WI NEWS  
FEBRUARY 2024*



**County Quiz, February**



**Museum Tours, February**



**Chicken Scratch, March**



**Christmas Tree Festival**



**Annual Council Meeting, April  
Guest Speaker Esme Young**



**Speaker Auditions, March**



**Christmas Singalong**



**Shoe Sale & Lunch, May**



**River Festival, July**



**Film Music Gala, May**



**Charity Walk, June**



**Winterbourne, May**

Hello everyone. Now the New Year is out of the way, welcome to the February issue! Here are just a few of the events and outings the Board of Trustees and sub committees have planned for 2024. We hope to see as many of you as we can at each one!

**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN



**Bedfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes**

WI House, 62 Adelaide Square  
Bedford MK40 2RW  
Tel: 01234 359538

**Mob:** 07423 819919 (this phone will be taken to events but not for contacting WI House.)

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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

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WI Duty Adviser for February 2024

**SALLY BALL**

**Is.ball@btinternet.com**

Please contact the duty adviser with WI related questions.

For anything urgent, please ring WI House on 01234 359538

**200 CLUB December 2023**

**No 144 Angela Armstrong**

**Leighton Buzzard WI : £50**

**FEDERATION FLUTTER**

**January 2024**

**No. 44 Leighton Buzzard WI : £50**

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS:**

**Knit , Sew & Crafters,** WI House, next dates: 28th Feb (call office for future dates) 10.30 to 2.30pm, no booking required £3 per person.

**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

**Friday 10th May,** Shoe Sale & Lunch, Flitwick Cricket Club

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

**Saturday 18 May,** Beginner's Crochet, Workshop, WI House

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

**Tuesday 11 June ,** Kurling, Brickhill Community Centre

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

**Friday 16 August,** Tiptree Farm & The Cheap Shop, Essex

*Planned—awaiting confirmation:*

- \* Big Green Week 08 -16 June, activities
- \* BCFWI Walk for Fun. Charity: Carers in Bedfordshire
- \* Jigsaw, Crazy Bag Whist evenings
- \* Shoe Sale & Lunch-Autumn
- \* Meets & Entertains-Autumn
- \* Proms Evening
- \* Christmas Sing along
- \* Christmas Craft Fair
- \* Blenheim at Christmas
- \* Christmas Tree Festival, St. Paul's Church

**QUIZ**

1	Which fruit is sometimes called a love apple?
2	Who sang the opening theme to the 1980s sitcom 'A Fine Romance'?
3	Which Poet Laureate wrote the poem <i>Valentine</i> ?
4	In 1994, which song performed by a Scottish group spent 15 weeks at number one in the British charts?
5	Who played William Shakespeare in the 1998 film <i>Shakespeare in Love</i> ?
6	Whose romantic relationships were written about in a 1996 novel by Helen Fielding?
7	What is the first name of Mr. Darcy - the aloof romantic hero in Jane Austen's novel <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> ?
8	Which chocolate company has used the advertising slogans: 'Chocolate Heaven Since 1911' and 'The Art of The Chocolatier'?
9	What is widely regarded as 'the most beautiful monument to love ever made'?
10	Who wrote the song <i>Crazy Little Thing Called Love</i> whilst in the bath?



## Chair's Chat



Hello Everyone, the Festive Season is long past and we find ourselves in February! This is a strange month, we are not quite able to say we are looking forward to Spring as February weather wise can be seen almost as the last winter month, in the meteorological year. February is also the shortest month with only 28 days although of course this is a leap year with 29 days.

One of the special days in February is Valentines Day, the 14<sup>th</sup>, celebrated around the world as a Festival of Love and Devotion. It is also a day within the WI Community where we acknowledge "Climate Change" with the "Show the Love Campaign". Our WIs will be crafting Green Hearts, to give or send to local community leaders, or family and friends, thereby showing support for the Climate Coalition. If you or your WI will be crafting Green Hearts, it would be

brilliant if you would send any photographs of the Hearts to [ATC@bedfordshirewis.org.uk](mailto:ATC@bedfordshirewis.org.uk) so that we can print as many as possible in the newsletter.

When I sat down to write this chat, I thought I would write about February, hence the first paragraph!! Then as a family, we have two birthdays in February, one falling on Valentines Day and that prompted the second paragraph with our "Show the Love" campaign. Obviously my brain needed a kick start after the Christmas break!

One final point is to say "Thank You" to all our members who came to the Sing a long at Cople. A new event this year, and from all the comments, a great success. The Trustees enjoyed themselves as well, and we sent all those present home with a smile on their faces!

Best Wishes to you all for a busy and eventful WI year,

Elizabeth



Audience at the Sing Along, Cople

**Christmas Cake Fund Raising Competition** Although we received only four entries for the above competition, those received paid testament to four brilliant cooks, when the cakes were tasted at the Christmas Sing along at Cople Village Hall. The members present demolished, is the best word, the cakes!!!

First Prize of a gift voucher and Mary Berry cookery book went to Westoning WI - Joyce Bonner.

Three WIs tied for second place :- Clapham Belles WI - Rosemary Isaacs; Cranfield WI - Nicola Hulland and Eggington WI - Michelle Sear

Congratulations Ladies and thank you all for taking part in the Competition.



BCFWI Tree in the church

### **Christmas Tree Festival, St. Paul's Church Bedford**

The Festival's theme had been Kings & Queens and Bedfordshire Federation chose 'The Three Kings' for our decorations. We did not have as many items donated as in previous years but those received were beautiful, and we happily dressed our tree with a few additional items from our stock in the House. Then when the festival closed, we transferred the decorations to our own tree in the House for the Christmas Open Day at which we welcomed members throughout the day. We have since heard from the Festival organisers that the fund raising effort reached an incredible amount in excess of £23,500. BCFWI were very proud to have been part of that effort.



At WI House Open Day

### **INFORMATION FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Please note that for a trial period in the first instance, WI house will be closed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This will take effect from 1st February 2024. Our Federation Secretary will be working from home on those days. Email communication will continue as normal. For telephone calls, please leave a message, which will be answered as soon as possible.

Tuesday once a month is mail collection day; for those WIs who collect, this **will move to the Wednesday**. On Mondays and Wednesdays, WI House will be open for members as usual.

Elizabeth

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February COUNTY QUIZ Addison Centre, Kempston 7.30pm**  
 Quiz time again ! Teams to consist of no more than three members, but WIs can enter several teams. Cost per team is £13. The eight winning teams go forward to represent our Federation at the Three Counties Quiz, which takes place later in the year, normally late June. If a WI has more than one winning team, only the highest scoring team is put forward. Spectators are welcome to support their team at £3 per person



\*\*\*\*\*



**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March SPEAKER AUDITION DAY Barton le Clay Village Hall**  
 An opportunity to listen to a variety of speakers and subjects, to obtain ideas for your WI programme. It is also a chance for you to decide which speakers are entered into the Speakers Directory. Tickets are £7 each and we are allowing a maximum of three members per WI 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. When representatives attend for only part of the day it is unfair on those unable to obtain a ticket. It is recommended that members bring a packed lunch. Tea & coffee will be provided.

\*\*\*\*\*

### 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 “The Great British Sewing Bee ” hit series on BBC2, was 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 will be a popular event. Tickets will be sold on first come, first served basis with



priority given to members until 29th February, when they will be made available to the general public, so do order early!!

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Friday May 10<sup>th</sup> 2024 SHOE SALE & LUNCH Flitwick Cricket Club**

We are changing the format slightly on the process of the Shoe sale to accommodate those members who do not require lunch. The sale will begin at 10.00am with tea & coffee as usual. Lunch will be served at 12 noon until 1.30pm. Between 1.30 & 3.30pm the sale will be open to those members who would prefer not to have lunch but would like to attend the sale. The sale itself has changed a little, in that there is often a jewellery table, and last time a rail of clothes to purchase, was also on display. We see this event as an experiment to enable us to satisfy all our members. Tickets to include lunch will cost £15, friends and family £16. Tickets for just the Shoe Sale alone will cost £7 per person to include tea & coffee.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024 Annual Walk for Fun & Charity 10.30 am at Priory Park Bedford**

What had become an annual event for BCFWI is to be reinstated and this year will be in aid of “Carers in Bedfordshire” which is destined to be the Charity we will focus on supporting this year. In the past we have split the monies raised three ways although many WIs also gave their portion to the Charity. This year we have chosen this local Charity and are considering a two way split of the money raised. We hope that members will agree and be pleased with this decision. Members will be required to check in with officials on the day before setting off on the walk, and can walk the Lake as many times as they wish, dependant on their own ability.

\*\*\*\*\*

Applications for all the above events will be via your WI Secretary or online at [bedfordshirewis.org.uk](http://bedfordshirewis.org.uk)

***Thank you to all those who donated cakes for the Federation Craft Sale at Flitwick on Saturday 25 November. These all went down exceedingly well, as did the bacon baps and other tasty titbits!***

The Higgins and Panacea Museums event taking place on Thursday February 29th 2024 is now fully booked with a standby list. If you would like to express an interest, we will consider repeating this event. The Higgins tour starts at 11.00am and will be followed by lunch in the adjacent restaurant "The Pantry" **payable on the day**. Following lunch, we cross the road to the Panacea Museum for the second guided tour of the day. Both tours will give us an insight into some of Bedford's interesting History. Cost is £10 per member and £12 for friends & family. Lurke Street Car Park MK 40 3HZ is a stones throw away.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Associated Country Women of the World

It has been discussed several times at the Board of Trustees and the Public Affairs committee, our position regarding the support we give to the above charity. It has been clarified at NFWI that we are able to change the charity if so desired. Many of our members will recall the "Pennies for Friendship" aspect that became Rural Women in Action. The decision was made at the Public Affairs sub-committee in December that from this year we would prefer to support a local Charity.

"Carers in Bedfordshire" was chosen and this decision is supported by the Board of Trustees. We have been in touch with the new charity and they are delighted. I am sure over the coming months we shall be able to interact with them and have them attend a meeting to inform us of their work in the community.

We envisage that we will choose a local charity to support each year. Many WIs use their monthly competition to raise money for a charity and this can continue, with cheques being made out to "Carers in Bedfordshire" when sent in to WI House. We generally request that these cheques are handed in at a Meets and Entertains event in the Autumn.

We do hope that all members will be happy to accept this decision. You can of course contact me if you have any questions or queries at [chairman@bedfordshirewis.org.uk](mailto:chairman@bedfordshirewis.org.uk)

### ART, SPORT & LEISURE

Rosemary Mitchell

Hello Ladies, I trust you all had a restful start to this New Year. Things are rumbling underfoot and we have our next committee meeting on Tuesday 30th January at 10.30 in WI House to finalise activities and events. We would welcome you if you would like to join us, bringing ideas we haven't tried before; just let the office know. Talking about a restful start, just to remind you we have several 500 piece jigsaws for hire, stored in WI House. It makes for a fun, friendly and cheap evening. Ring me or WI House to view them or book a date for hiring. A minimum £10 donation is all that is required.

We have a few places for the Film Music Gala at the Royal Albert Hall on **11th May**, but the closing date is imminent, so if you are thinking about it, check now with the office or book online.

Our visit to Winterbourne House & Gardens nr Birmingham on **30th May** will be a pleasant day out, at an Arts & Craft House with large gardens. Read the details on the Application form - it's a lovely place.

**11th June** as promised, we have booked another Indoor Kurling evening at Brickhill Community Centre. Application form will be out soon.

In the meantime, have a good month, *Rosemary*.

### Answers to Quiz on Page

1. Tomato
2. Judy Dench
3. Carol Anne Duffy
4. Love is All Around (for Wet Wet Wet)
5. Joseph Fiennes
6. Brigit Jones's
7. Fitzwilliam
8. Thorntons
9. The Taj Mahal
10. Freddie Mercury

**A gentle reminder, this is a very busy period for the Federation Treasurer. To help her finalise the financial year end, please, please would Treasurers send in any outstanding monies due, late member fees; any tickets purchased but not yet paid for etc. And a little note of what each payment is for would be even more helpful. Many thanks.**



I have used this recipe for some time I hope you enjoy as much as we do. Liz

### COTTAGE PIE

- 500g Beef Mince
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, 1 carrot, 2 sticks celery, all finely chopped
- 300g mushrooms, finely chopped like breadcrumbs
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 125ml red wine
- 250ml Beef Stock
- 1 tsp Marmite & 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 bay leaf

For the topping:

- 800g red potatoes: peeled & chopped into even sized pieces
- 90g butter, 50ml milk & 100g mature cheddar, grated

- In a large pan, fry the meat for 2-3 minutes until nicely golden all over. Caramelisation adds flavour, so don't be afraid to let it start colouring. Use a slotted spoon to remove the cooked mince and put into a bowl.
- Add the olive oil to the pan (leaving any excess beef fat and brown bits in the pan), add the onion, carrot and celery. Sauté for 5-8 minutes, until beginning to soften. Add finely chopped mushrooms to the pan, cook for 3-4 minutes. Add the tomato purée and stir well.
- Pour in the wine, scraping bottom of pan with the spoon to release its flavour. After cooking for 1 minute, return the browned mince, along with the stock, Marmite, Worcestershire sauce and bay leaf. Put the lid on pan, simmer for 10 minutes, while you prepare the mash.
- Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6. Add the chopped potatoes to a large pan, cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, cook for 10-15 minutes, until tender. Drain into a colander & rinse in cold water to wash away excess starch and set aside. Mash the potatoes, adding 75g of the butter and the milk. Stir just enough to combine and season.
- Remove the lid from the mince and allow to reduce for a further 5-10 minutes. Taste the mince and season. Remove bay leaf and pour into 2L ovenproof dish (about 20x25cm). Spread the mashed potato over the mince & use spoon to create a wavy pattern in the potato. Sprinkle with the grated cheese and dot over the remaining 15g butter. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the potato is golden brown on top and the dish is piping hot throughout. Allow to stand for 5 minutes before serving with green veg.



### **Chicken Scratch - Saturday 09 March - WI House**

In January we mentioned about the course on the 9th March for which application forms were sent to your secretary. But if you'd like more information, please contact us. As you can see from the pictures, we will be making this needle case.



**New: 18 May Beginner's Crochet Course** (Max 10) run by Nicola Furey is planned. Look out for details in next issue!

We have pencilled in a coach trip to the **Cheap Shop** (craft supplies) and **Tiptree Jam Factory** for **Friday 16 August**. This offers crafters a chance to get buying at this crafting emporium before stepping across the road to the Jam factory for a look round the museum and gift shop and leisurely lunch or snack in their tea room. We plan 4 pick ups, including one nearer Dunstable or Stockwood Park again, **unless a member suggests another trusted pick up they know of and can let us know as soon as possible**. (We're trying to encourage members from all around the county to join our days out). Price to be confirmed but expected to be around £35.

In planning stage: Christmas At Blenheim — We are awaiting details of their Christmas programme. Watch this space!

**Clifton's** Christmas Party in December was very special. Catering for our buffet was done by Jo at Discolicious. Entertainment by Singer Cara Bo "Dancing included". We had Prosecco Fruit Juice and a Christmas Raffle. And in January, after the flurry of Christmas and New Year, we had a fun games afternoon and book stall.

At **Northill & Ickwell** our speaker, an independent ambassador for Tropic, gave an extremely interesting talk on the toxin free products that Tropic supply. She also talked a bit about the history of this beauty product and the founder of the business. Etta performed a skin care and nourishing demonstration on a volunteer, describing the products she was using and why they were so good for the skin. Members were thanked for bringing in various gifts for the Need Project and it was also our WI's 34<sup>th</sup> birthday, so the evening ended with Cava and birthday cake.

**Cranfield** had a wonderful start to Christmas, we took part in the Christmas Tree festival at the Parish Church, our entry was the Carol 'In the Bleak Mid Winter' we cultivated the tree after we entered it two years ago at a festival and it has grown well. 34 members and friends enjoyed a two course Christmas lunch prepared and cooked by one of our member's daughters. Tea, coffee, mints and mince pies were served to us. At our first meeting of 2024, the speaker was Evan Willison, whose talk was entitled 'Tales from the Auction Room'. Evan worked as an Auctioneer at Woburn Auction house with his colleague Charlie Ross. Evan is a very entertaining speaker who made his talk so interesting, showing various antique items and giving us an insight into their origins, He had organised a competition for everyone to take part in 'guess what's in the bag', which caused a lot of fun and exploration! A 'bring and share' supper was enjoyed by everyone. A really congenial and enjoyable evening to start the New Year.

19 members from **Houghton Conquest** went on a coach trip to Waddesdon Manor, where there was a Christmas Fayre, a light trail and the house was beautifully decorated. The themes this year were Alice in Wonderland and Peter Pan. Despite the miserable wet weather we all the enjoyed the day out. Two members also went to the absolutely wonderful John Rutter concert the day before. Then Houghton Conquest's New Year party saw 21 members and 27 family and friends join together for a three course meal with wine and soft drinks. This was followed by entertainment with Richard Stark, who sang songs from west end shows from My Fair Lady up to the Jersey Boys. With each different song there was a change of jacket so he really got into the characters. He is a very good singer and thoroughly recommended.

On a very wet evening, **Wilstead** held their Christmas Meeting. Attendance was good considering the outside conditions. The hall looked very festive. The tables were decorated with red table runners, tinsel and poinsettias as centre-pieces. Members had been asked to wear their Christmas jumpers. The speaker for the evening, Kirsty McGilley, from 'The Bedfordshire Flower School' gave an interesting demonstration of how to make a Christmas wreath. She explained that the wreaths could be re-used in Spring, with small bulbs inserted, in Summer, with flowers and in Autumn with fruits and seed-heads. Refreshments were served half way through the demonstration. Hot sausage rolls and shortbread were enjoyed, along with tea or coffee. One member read us an amusing verse that she had been sent by a friend. It made us all chuckle.

Our first meeting of 2024 was held in the afternoon so that members could travel to and from the venue in the light. We started our 'Beetle Drive' which proved to be a lot of fun, full of laughter and chatter. Members had been asked to bring a plate of food along to share. What a feast turned up! There were assorted sandwiches, sausage rolls, quiche, crisps and cheese and pineapple on sticks. To follow, we enjoyed cakes, chocolates and biscuits, accompanied by tea and coffee. After further rounds of the beetle drive, a winner was declared and a prize awarded.

At **Eggington** we are flying though our second year. In November we had numerous guests in the form of small animals brought along by Mark Amey. Mark gave an interesting talk about the animals he works with and some members were brave enough to handle them, including the snake. In December members and guests enjoyed making Christmas wreaths and January saw our second midwinter supper together while we discussed and debated the 2024 resolution proposals.



Eggington WI making wreaths

**Flitwick** members were treated to a Christmas meal at the Flying Horse in Clophill in December where a good time was had by all. Our raffle was for Christmas Hampers made up of donations made by our members.

Cont/.....

**Renhold WI** “Christmas Tree” which was on display in Renhold Church along with many other amazing trees from village groups. It was created from decorated wooden spoons which had been entered into Renhold Wi Christmas Competition. They think you will agree it was a super effort from a very small WI. The winner is to be announced at their January meeting.



Renhold tree



Caddington WI party

**Caddington WI** Having recovered from Christmas and New Year celebrations we are off to a busy 2024. Our President, Carol Jones, wanted to increase our Membership to 30 by Christmas and we did it! We have people ready to join us in February, too. Our Christmas party was enjoyed with plates of food laid out with food provided by the members; always a good selection with lots of cakes, us ladies do like cakes! Games were played with Pass the Parcel, a Secret Santa with gifts we had brought along duly wrapped, so everyone received a present to go home with.



Ampthill WI Tree

**Shefford's** Christmas tree was placed third by the judges in the Christmas tree festival.

And to round off our Festive reports:

**Ampthill WI** have supplied us this pic of their superb entry in their own Tree Festival, winning a worthy 2nd place this year.



Shefford WI Tree

## Membership Advisory Committee

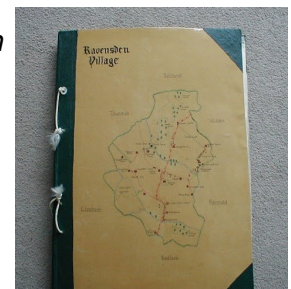


Beds WI Facebook

**Scrapbook Challenge:** Back in the 1970's a competition was held where WIs were asked to provide a scrapbook of “A year in the life of a WI and its members”. Entries greatly varied and provided a good insight into life at the time. The entries are now held in the local archive services.

The Membership Advisory Committee would like to repeat this idea, to show how things have changed. The competition will cover the year from April 2024 through to March 2025.

Submissions to be made via any physical medium. To allow all submissions to be compared equally the outer cover will not be judged and digital submissions will not be accepted. Look out for more details in your March mailing.



Beds WI Facebook pic

**Bedford River Festival July 20/21st:** Doesn't time fly, is it really two years since we were dressing up the Bandstand on Bedford Embankment?! Well, we have booked to have a stand at the 2024 event and anticipate decorating the Bandstand again with knitted, home crafted, crocheted items in Green, Mauve & White to show the fantastic flair and skills of our WI membership. We are hoping to make the display bigger and better than ever, adding to the articles so generously donated last time, which we will be recycling, in the spirit of Big Green Week from June. But as our plans have not been confirmed, we are not issuing the call to arms just yet. Watch out for news in the March issue.

**Training Day: Saturday 15th June, Barton le Clay Village Hall:** We have decided to hold a training day for WI Officers in a bigger location. The idea is to offer our Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers training with a chance to socialise, to share ideas and do some good old networking with other WIs. If you have anything you want to cover or any questions you have please let us know on [FedSec@bedfordshireWIs.org.uk](mailto:FedSec@bedfordshireWIs.org.uk).