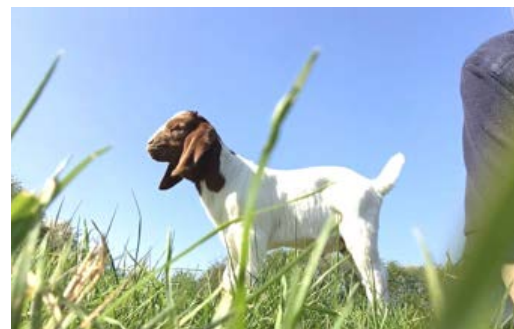
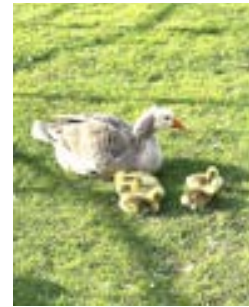




BEDFORDSHIRE WI NEWS *MAY 2025*



Welcome to the May issue! To capture the moment, here are some gorgeous babies to herald the start of summer with its promise of sun, days out and events to attend . . . amongst which we offer another Speaker Showcase & the Three Counties Quiz final in June; a trip to The National Arboretum, floral fun with Miss Dorothy and Wine Tasting Supper in July; a coach trip to Hunstanton and the Charity Fun walk in August. September sees WI Day, the Jigsaw Challenge and Proms Evening. Wooh, busy times ahead!



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

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

Secretary: Catherine Bentley

Newsletter Editor: Hazel Wade

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: Knit , Sew & Craft, WI House, 10.30 to 2.30pm, £3. Ring office for dates

Wed 04 June NFWI Annual Meeting, Gravenhurst

Sat 14 June Speaker Showcase, Barton le Clay VH

Thurs 19 June, Three Counties Quiz Final, Flitwick

23rd June 5 days BCFWI Holiday to Yorkshire

Wed 02 July Floral Demo with "Miss Dorothy" Ampthill

Thurs 10 July National Arboretum coach trip

Friday 25 July Wine Tasting Supper, **Wilstead V.H**

Mon 04 Aug Coach trip to Hunstanton

Sunday 10 August Fun Walk, Priory Park Bedford

Tues 16 Sept WI Day events Jordans, Nr Biggleswade

Friday 26 Sept Proms Evening, Kings House Bedford

Monday 29 September Jigsaw Challenge, Kempston

Sat 11 Oct Concept to Catwalk Wilstead VH 2 - 4pm

Tuesday 21 Oct Crazy Bag Whist, Gravenhurst

Sat 29 Nov Christmas Craft Fair, Flitwick VH

FEDERATION FLUTTER

**April 2025: No. 88 Elizabeth Overfield
Shefford WI £50**

WI Duty Adviser for May 2025

DOT WIGG

MACchair@bedfordshirewis.org.uk

Please contact the duty adviser with WI related issues

WI Bulb Scheme

We sent out the 2025 bulb catalogue in the last mailing. We do hope you will look through and order your next year's spring and summer bulbs. Do encourage friends & family to order some too.



Your WI bulb co-ordinator will have information on ordering & your bulbs are usually delivered directly to them in September. Thank you!

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Contact Katarina 07982 465351
katarina@lifestoryinabook.com
lifestoryinabook.com

LIFE STORY  IN A BOOK



Hello everyone, I do hope you all have been able to make the most of the April sunshine?

Spring has really sprung !!! It is so lovely to look out into the garden and see the daffodils and all the spring flowers coming into bloom. We have a garden full of hedges that are good nesting places for the birds. So that has become a coffee morning ritual about 11am to sit and watch which birds are where. Robins, Blue Tits, Sparrows. The Starlings descend on mass at one hedge about 15 at any one time!!!

WI News.... Our annual meeting was a success, speakers were excellent as expected. Our disappointment was around the numbers attending!! We moved from the main auditorium at Kings House to a smaller hall due to lack of numbers. What are we getting wrong ? We change days for events where we can, weekdays, day time, evenings, Saturdays!!! Last year a fun speaker, this year more educational. The unveiling of the Climate Banner. A BIG THANK YOU to Lynn Manning of Bedford WI who was the main sewing lady in the making of this, although there was some input from the sewing ladies who meet at WI House and maybe one or two friends as well!!! Not every WI was able to produce a green heart but Lynn designed some simple hearts with the name of the missing WI. So, all our WIs are named on the Banner.

Your Trustees are concerned, as I said at the meeting, about keeping the Federation alive! We need more Trustees and our subcommittees also struggle for members. Please think about how you can help. Yes, help on the day is very much welcome and appreciated but we also need help and new ideas on organising events. Apologies for ending on a sad note, we are here for you all; tell us what you would like us to do, what are your or your WIs interests. Please send any thoughts to me at the Chairmans email that is on the first page of the Newsletter. That simple thing could help!!

Best Wishes to you all

Elizabeth



Admin Assistant

Bedfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes are seeking a part-time Admin Assistant to provide secretarial and administrative support to the Board of Trustees and its subcommittees, together with day to day routine office duties.

IT literacy and numeracy skills are essential together with a knowledge of Microsoft 365, Word and Excel.

Hours : 4 hours daily Monday to Thursday (timings negotiable)

Salary £12.50 per hour

Job Description available on request.

Please forward CVs by email to Chair of Board of Trustees: Elizabeth at cochrane161@btinternet.com

This position must be filled as a priority. The application deadline is May 30th; however, we reserve the right to close the application process should a suitable candidate be identified earlier.

Riddles For May

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | I have keys but no doors, I have space but no rooms, I allow you to enter but you can't leave - What am I? |
| 2 | What do Tea Pots, Tulips and Teabags all have in common? |
| 3 | Which superhero is terrible at their job because they always procrastinate? |
| 4 | Where does April always come before May? |
| 5 | What can you Eat, Play with, Watch and listen to Music on? |
| 6 | What two things can you never eat for Dinner? |
| 7 | I have plenty of branches, but I have no roots, fruit, trunk or leaves - What am I? |
| 8 | I am a fruit, a bird and I am also a person from New Zealand - What am I? |
| 9 | Feed me and I grow, give me water and I die - what am I? |
| 10 | I travel all over the world but I never leave my corner - What am I? |

Flower Arranger & Entertainer Extraordinaire
Neil Gurney aka Miss Dorothy
Wednesday July 2nd 2025
Parkside Community Hall, Ampthill MK45 2HX
Doors open at 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

Come and see, laugh, and be entertained by the unique Neil Gurney as Miss Dorothy, whilst demonstrating the very best of Flower arranging
 Tickets £13 per person and Friends and Family very welcome.
 Closing date June 13th 2025

Tickets to be purchased via the web site bedfordshirewis.org.uk



Wine Tasting and Supper Evening Friday July 25th 2025
7.00 for 7.30pm at Wilstead Village Hall
Sommelier Nigel Strofton
with Wines from Spain & Portugal

Nigel will guide us through the evening with Wines to complement each of our three courses.

Tickets £28 per person Friends & Family Welcome.

Please note a **change of venue** from Westoning Village Hall from previous years and there is also a **change of date** from that published in forthcoming events in the March Newsletter

Tickets to be purchased via bedfordshirewis.org.uk

Walking for Fun & Friendship Sunday August 10th 2025 at 10.30 am

Our annual walk will as usual, take place at Priory Park, Bedford MK41 9DJ
 Please remember to check in & out at the Federation Stand which will be on the mound near the restaurant.

Walkers may walk the lake as often as they wish!

Our Charity of the year is **Sue Ryder** and sponsorship forms will be in the current mailing.



****NEW EVENT ** In partnership with Bedford Arts & Crafts Centre, we present**
FROM CONCEPT TO CATWALK

Saturday 11th October 2pm to 4pm Wilstead Village Hall

Join us for an exciting showcase where craftsmanship meets creativity and every stitch tells a story!

Enjoy a little light fizz and nibbles and enjoy the show
 We hope to have side stalls offering craft & jewellery items

More details to come in the June issue

JORDANS MILL Biggleswade SG18 9JX
"110 years of Women's Institutes September 16th 2025"
DISPLAY OF BANNERS



Jordans have kindly allowed us use of their rooms on the second floor to celebrate this momentous occasion! We would like all our WI's, if you have a Banner / Table Runner, to send it in to WI House by July 31st
 We will display all Banners / Runners received together with all the Scrapbooks and Tea Cosies received for the Scrapbook Challenge and the Margaret Smart Trophy.

Jordans will be open as usual and will have their own events going on, such as tours of the mill, the shop will be open as well as serving coffee and teas etc as normal. There is no charge for members to attend our event. We have some information on their Tours etc. which will be attached to a President and Secretaries email. Could be a summer visit for individual WI's!!

Visit to The National Arboretum Staffordshire Thursday 10th July 2025

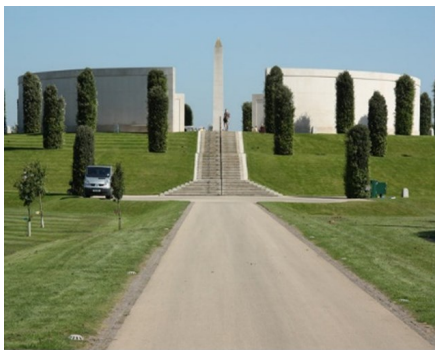
There are so many pictures to display but nothing like seeing them for real!! There are still seats available so come and see them with us! .

There is a WI Memorial so I will see if we can arrange a wreath for us to place on the day.

Cost per person £35 (includes a donation). Friends and Family Welcome

Pick ups at Sundon Depot 7.15 am; Flitwick 7.30am; Bedford Park & Ride 8.00am, and Rushden 8.40am

Purchase Tickets through our website
Bedfordshire.org.uk/events



COMBINED ARTS

Is.ball@btinternet.com

A very big hello to you all and what a variable spring we've been enjoying of late. Lots of sun, with rather a mix of temperatures! Talking of sunny days . . . we are really looking forward to our summer coach trip to Hunstanton on **Monday 04 August** (a reminder here, this is a change of date from the March Future Events entry). The details have gone out in the last month's mailing.

Pick ups: Flitwick – opposite Village Hall MK45 1HP 8:30 am, Bedford Park & Ride MK42 9XF 9:00 am Friends & Family welcome.



I am still watching the situation over the balance of **50 matinee tickets** we are seeking to make up our usual 100 for the John Rutter Christmas Celebrations at the Royal Albert Hall. We will put out further information as we receive it.

As a nice gentle lead up to autumnal activities, we have our Jigsaw Evening on Monday 29 September in Kempston at which we are expecting to offer a light supper to kick off the proceedings as usual. This is always a fun event and it would be great to have some other teams join in and try to beat the regulars!

Even more madcap fun by way of our Crazy Bag Whist is on at Gravenhurst on 21st October. Supper not included this time but there is usually a fish & chip van in the car park on the night. This event too is likely to be well attended and both are available to book now.

Sally

Something a little different this month. **Blender Banana Loaf**

Ingredients

10 grams Soft Butter
110 grams Soft Brown Sugar
2 Medium Eggs
3 Ripe Bananas
225 grams Self Raising Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Bicarbonate of Soda
1 Teaspoon Cinnamon
140 grams Raisins

Preheat the oven 180C/350F and line a 2lb loaf tin.

Place the softened butter and sugar in the blender with two of the bananas.

Blend on low for 30 to 40 seconds until completely mixed.

Add the eggs and half the flour, the bicarbonate of soda and cinnamon.

Blend on low for 60 seconds until mixed, open the blender and push down the mixture then add the remaining flour; blend for a further 10 to 20 seconds.

Open the blender push down the mixture, add the raisins and the other banana lightly mashed with a fork stir with the spatula.

Pour the mixture into the prepared tin bake for 40-45 minutes.



Pic

Liz Potter



Pic: Gillian Fraser

MARGARET SMART TROPHY

We hope you've all received the schedule and application form. You are able to book online or use the application form. If you need a copy of the schedule and the application form, please contact us in the office. We look forward to seeing all entries. Good luck.

GOOD LUCK
Best wishes **Liz**



Pic Editor

ANSWERS from P3

1	A KEYBOARD
2	T
3	WONDER WOMAN
4	IN A DICTIONARY
5	APPLES
6	BREAKFAST & LUNCH
7	A BANK
8	A KIWI
9	A FIRE
10	A STAMP

GARDENING

- Jobs for May going into June include keeping up with the weeding programme - regular short sharp bursts very often help.
- Stake up tall perennials and plant out new ones in blocks for maximum colour and coverage, an odd number of plants is always most effective.
- Plant up containers & pots for summer colour. Water these regularly.
- Just before strawberry flowers open, hoe the ground/compost then cover with short straw to prevent the emerging fruit from mud splashes. If late frost arrives, cover any blooms with the straw.
- Set out dahlia tubers, planting 1 metre apart and leave them in situ until the first autumnal frosts. Dahlias prefer medium to heavy soil in a sunny spot. If leaving them in, mulch well to protect from frost.
- Plant half hardy annuals into their summer positions - either newly bought or those sown from seed in March.
- Trim ornamental hedges to retain their shape.



Pic: Editors own garden

How about checking out some local gardens that might be opening now in the Open Garden Scheme. It's so good to see inspiring garden schemes and also help some charity causes.

Dunstable held their annual event where members run the evening and the committee are guests, each of whose chair had a thank you gift of a beautiful butterfly book mark, in recognition of all their hard work during the year. Sadly, the booked speaker had phoned to say they would not be able to attend. As the food brought by members was already set out the decision was made to start earlier than intended. It was good to be able to chat and catch up with other members as sometimes there is not any time during a meeting .



Kempston Rural had two good speakers in February and March – Jonathan Cox, a retired Scotland Yard detective, who has written a series of eight fictional books based on actual events. He entertained them with a number of anecdotes, and the other was Steve Dimmer. He gave a talk entitled 'Grumpy Old Men'. These characters are typically found in sit-coms and his talk was illustrated with clips from familiar shows.

At **Cranfield** our March meeting was our 54th Anniversary and Annual Meeting and we were joined by our WI Adviser Sue Pestell. After completion of the Annual Meeting business, a couple of our members talked to us about their trip to the Pantomime in Brick Lane which they had thoroughly enjoyed. Members then celebrated the occasion with a slice of the anniversary cake and a cup of tea.

In March, **Caldecote** held their AGM, indulged in delicious cakes, and enjoyed a fascinating talk from Christine Farmer about her visit to The Repair Shop. It was intriguing to learn how the programme operates behind the scenes. The application process sounded quite complex, and the team research the background of each object to verify that it does belong to the person bringing it to the show! Christine took along a cherished Victorian sewing table, a piece she fondly remembers from a kind neighbour who looked after her as a child. The transformation was remarkable—the before-and-after photos showed the incredible craftsmanship of Will and the team at The Repair Shop. Christine also shared that the presenters are just as warm and genuine in real life as they appear on screen. They take great pride in their work, combining skill, care, and passion to restore treasured possessions.

Wilstead members were fascinated by our speaker's talk. It was not what many members had expected to hear about quilts and the various patterns. The presentation was entitled 'The Patterned Path to Freedom'. Kay Goddard told about the life-stories passed on in Africa, by the men-folk making patterns on cotton cloth, using blocks and dye. In the days of slavery, many men, women and children were sent to Southern America to be sold as slaves. They worked hard in the Cotton Fields and were not allowed to read or write. They were punished if they tried but they found that they could communicate by singing songs and making symbols from the scraps of cloth given to the slaves to make into clothes. Both of these held secrets that the slave-owners could not understand. Making quilts helped to keep them warm too. These quilts told stories, by their patterns that the owners were not aware of. Eventually the patterns became recognisable. Kay also spoke about slaves that escaped mistreatment using 'The Underground Railway' Kay is a speaker we can thoroughly recommend.

At **Houghton Conquest**, after the President and Secretary gave their reports, and the business was finished, there were eight cheeses that we were able to taste and then had to guess what they were. We finished off the evening with a game of bingo.

Veri Granger from Bedfordshire Police & the Eastern Cyber Resilience Centre (ECRC) gave **Westoning** a very informative talk on Cyber Fraud and Scams and lots of ways to protect ourselves against the very clever scammers who make it their job to exploit the vulnerable. Cyber fraud is on the increase so by taking some simple steps when using any form of social media we can increase our protection against the successful scammers. She shared some incidents where people have been tricked by a scam and in some case have lost many thousands of pounds. This is a recommended talk.

Keysoe's speaker at our March meeting was Paul Gillion, a water safety officer with the RNLI. Paul explained how the RNLI came to be formed in 1824 using only rowing boats & how the rescue crafts have evolved over the centuries; however the two guiding principles of its founder remain intact to the present day, that the crews should consist almost entirely of volunteers & that it should be publicly funded. Paul was an engaging speaker who showed us a short film of different rescues by various RNLI rescue craft, some of which were dangerous for the crews, which was very humbling.

Wharley End enjoyed an engaging talk given by Ruth Roper Wylde, a keen ghost hunter, who, based on her studies, knowledge and experiences, drew us into stories relating to the world of ghosts and unworldly happenings. Ruth gathers information from many sources and has written books on the subject. Ruth provided a very different - and ghostly- perspective regarding our local villages, and "haunts".

Sandy recently had a go at Indoor Kurling. Pictured are the winners! Alison and Tosh Ross guided us through this very gentle exercise which was great fun and a change from our normal format of sitting and listening to (albeit very interesting!) speakers. **Sutton's** speaker was Deidre Hanna known as Derry. She had spent a long career as a representative of airlines in charge of organising chauffeurs for important guests. She regaled us with amusing stories of the various passengers she encountered. With the mantra 'the passenger is always right' firmly in mind she told us about a passenger who threw water over her, those who became very irate when cars were not ready for them and those who had very public rows with their husbands!! She concluded her talk with a poem which described a charity run she did on the tarmac at Heathrow at night. This was to support the Anthony Nolan trust and involved running on a rippled runway. When it got slippery she discovered she as running on mating worms! Derry has written a book complete with amusing illustrations about her experiences. She was amusing and well received by her audience.



The Great Swishing Event which **Maulden WI** hosted on 1st February was very well supported by the local community. A huge quantity of good quality clothing was sorted and displayed before the doors opened and most of it was enthusiastically “swished” during the morning. Participants enjoyed tea and coffee during the interval and shopped for eco-friendly items from our guest vendor Simply Bee Eco. Items left over



at the end were divided between three local charities so absolutely nothing went to waste. Next year's event is already in the planning stages.

At the March meeting of **Great Barford WI**, John McCombe talked about the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire SERV group of Bloodrunners. SERV stands for Service by Emergency Response Volunteers. John explained they are part of a nationwide voluntary organisation that provides a free out of hours delivery service for blood products, patient samples, Human Donor Milk, medical equipment, and drugs. They serve the hospitals in our region, as well as Hospices and Milk Banks saving the NHS millions of pounds. Originally the Bloodrunners used motorbikes but in recent years they also use cars. Most of the bikes and cars are owned, fuelled and insured by the volunteers although a number of vehicles have been donated. There are similar organisations across the country, and they coordinate their movements to bring about a relay across borders. This is an invaluable charity responsible for saving lives and supporting the NHS. Sadly, John explained that the future of the Bloodrunners is in jeopardy as the NHS is looking to pay private couriers for some of the work they currently do. The kind, selfless dedication of these volunteers was very inspiring.

Library Walk members enjoyed an excellent speaker, David Duker who spoke passionately about Battle of Britain Pilot Squadron Leader, Victor Ekins, and told many other stories of the brave young pilots who fought in the war.

Climate Ambassador

anniejpalmer@hotmail.com>

Recently, I attended a talk by Peter Topley, past Hon. President of the Conchological Society which promotes the conservation of molluscs. Its title was: Slugs and Snails (not puppy dogs' tails). Slugs and snails are gastropods which means 'stomach foot'. There are 44 recognised species of slugs in the UK but only nine of them eat live plants. These creatures play a very important part in ecosystems. They are members of nature's clean-up crew. They feed on rotting plants, fungi, poo, algae and carrion, helping to recycle nitrogen, nutrients and minerals back into the soil. Slugs and snails are decomposer organisms that help break down the organic matter in compost heaps and bins. After a fascinating talk, a member of the audience said: "That's all well and good, but how do you get rid of the little b*****s?". Poor Peter! There was some discussion about putting a container of beer out for them to drown in – at least they'd die happy.

Slugs and snails love compost heaps and bins so, on damp evenings, collect them up and put them in there. Leopard slugs are good to have around as they eat dead plant material and are cannibals. Encourage mollusc's predators to your garden by, for instance, growing shrubs with berries. These attract birds such as blackbirds and thrushes which eat slugs and snails. The shrub *Leycesteria formosa* (Pheasant Berry) is brilliant at doing this.

Slugs and snails prefer wet conditions to dry and are most active at night. Watering your pots etc first thing in the morning ensures that the soil has dried out by the evening, making them less attractive to these minibeasts.

I couldn't believe the number of slugs and snails that were in my garden throughout last year's damp summer. Peter said it was because we are continuing to lose their predators (frogs, toads, hedgehogs etc). The UK has only 50% of it's biodiversity left (Gov. 2023). Since 1970, there's been a fall of a third in the abundance of wildlife (RSPB). The reasons for this catastrophic decline are pesticide use and development destroying countryside. The response from the powers that be is to substantially increase this destruction by Build, Build, Build. This is insane as we can't exist without countryside. Have the lunatics taken over the asylum?

Please would you consider not using slug pellets (pesticides) as they not only kill the molluscs you don't want but they also eradicate the many that we need.