



# Middlesex News

## June 2015

theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN

1915 FOR 100 YEARS 2015

### To all MFWI Member's.

By now you would have heard I have stood down as your Chairman. I have enjoyed my 3 years in office. The wonderful events I have attended have been so different ranging from Baby Contests to Group Meetings, I have enjoyed them all. The members of The Board of Trustees and Membership Representatives have all supported me and have worked so hard on your behalf I hope to see you at some of the events celebrating the 100 years.

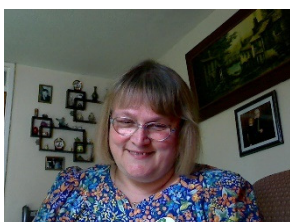
The only reason I had to leave was for health reasons and Alan (my greatest supporter) has a health issue as well.

Thank you for all the cards, letters, emails and phone calls, they have helped to ease my disappointment of having to leave.

I wish the Federation all success and to go from strength to strength.

Yours in WI friendship,

Vivien Beckett - Past County Chairman 2012 to 2015



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The Board of Trustees were sad to receive the resignation of Mrs Vivien Beckett as Chairman of Middlesex Federation. In 2012 Vivien was elected and has worked tirelessly for the Federation, we send her our best regards and hope her health improves in the very near future.

On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April the Board of Trustees were called to County Office to elect a new member from the board to stand as Chairman. Mrs Elizabeth Morrell, First Vice Chairman and WI Adviser was duly elected. Mrs Carol Sullivan, Chair of Membership acted as teller at the meeting.



We are delighted to welcome the new Chairman of Middlesex.

Liz has been a WI member for many years and has worked tirelessly on the Membership Committee previously known as Organisation. Liz is also a WI Adviser for Middlesex and now serves on the NFWI Membership committee.

Liz says, "I am really excited to be voted in as Chairman and to help build on the strength and success the Federation has today. The WI is a fantastic institution and has a reputation of inspiring many women throughout its existence. I look forward to playing my part and meeting as many of you at the Centenary events planned over the coming months".

**Craft Booking Details:** To save space on the events list, I have noted booking details for Dabble Days and Workshops below all of which are held at County Office:

**Dabble Days** are 10.30-4.00pm and the fee is payable on the day - **booking essential.**

**Workshops** are as priced and payable in advance by cheque to secure your place (Cheques will be cashed when confirmation of event is taking place). Bank transfer can be arranged, please ask Lorraine for details. All bookings to go to [mfwicountycraft@gmail.com](mailto:mfwicountycraft@gmail.com) or [lorraineareed@gmail.com](mailto:lorraineareed@gmail.com) or 01895 676105 or call/text 07976 398533

### UPCOMING EVENTS

(See separate note on Dabble Day info)

#### June 4 2015

National AGM at Albert Hall

10:30 - 17:00 (see your Secretary for details)

Also a live showing at  
Cineworld, Feltham

#### Saturday June 13 2015

Craft Dabble Day - Silk Painting for  
Beginners - cost £7.00

#### June 21 2015 - pm

Mikron Theatre - performing  
Raising Agents (play about a WI) in  
Perivale Woods - details via your  
Secretary

#### July 2 2015

Craft Dabble Day - Cathedral Window  
Patchwork - Cost £5.00

#### July 19 2015

MFWI at the Autoshow, Uxbridge  
Showground

#### July 25 2015

Digital Storytelling Workshop, County  
Office 10:30-16:00 - cost £13.50(tbc)

#### August 8 2015

Craft Dabble Day - Knit small toys &  
Natter - Cost £5.00

#### August 6 2015

Craft Dabble Day - Traditional  
Japanese Sashiko Sewing Sampler -  
Cost £7.00

#### August 22 2015

Digital Storytelling Workshop, County  
Office 10:30-16:00 - cost £13.50(tbc)

#### September 3 2015

Craft Dabble Day - Scrapbooking for  
Beginners - Cost £12.00

#### September 13 2015

A week of Craft Exhibition & Demos  
Cow Byre, Manor Farm, Ruislip

#### September 16 2015

WI Birthday Day - 1915

#### October 2 2015

ACWW Day - 2.00 Methodist Church,  
Ruislip - tbc

#### October 31 2015

Craft Dabble Day - Beading for  
Beginners - Cost £14.00

#### December 12 2015

Carol Service 11-12.00  
Methodist Church, Ruislip

## Contact details

### COUNTY OFFICE:

Unit 3 - No 7, The Green,  
West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7PL

**Tel:** 01895 440161 **Email:** [office@mfwi.co.uk](mailto:office@mfwi.co.uk)

### OFFICE OPENING HOURS:

Monday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Wednesday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

(Answer phone is in operation outside office hours)

**FEDERATION CHAIRMAN:** Liz Morrell

**FEDERATION VICE CHAIR:** Lorraine Reed

**FEDERATION SECRETARY:** Sarah Wilson  
[office@mfwi.co.uk](mailto:office@mfwi.co.uk)

### PUBLICATIONS - OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday 10:00 am to 12:00 noon

**FEDERATION NEWSLETTER:** Lorraine Reed

[editor.middlesexnews@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:editor.middlesexnews@hotmail.co.uk) or

[lorraineareed@gmail.com](mailto:lorraineareed@gmail.com)

**HANDWRITTEN AND EMAILED AROUND THE WIs**

**REPORTS (50-80 words) TO:**

Mrs L Reed, 126 Dartmouth Road, Ruislip,  
Middlesex HA4 0DG

You can also find us on .....

[www.twitter.com/mfwi](https://www.twitter.com/mfwi)

[www.facebook.com/pages/Middlesex-Federation-WI/573087366051331](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Middlesex-Federation-WI/573087366051331)

[www.facebook.com/groups/388213284632558/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/388213284632558/)

## COMPETITION REMINDER

Create an image of the Queen in any medium you like!  
Entries to County Office by close of business on Friday 31<sup>st</sup>  
July 2015.

Don't forget .... Be creative

## DIGITAL STORYTELLING

By Lorraine Reed

In anticipation of a competition being announced by NFWI, MFWI will be running two workshops at County Office on July 25<sup>th</sup> and August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015.

There will be further details to come but it will be worth starting to think about someone attending a workshop. If you have people already competent why not start recording your stories (voice recording) and taking photographs/videos over the next few weeks/months

The Centenary year starts in September 2015 but as you know there are many events taking place already. With this in mind, you need to have cameras at the ready ladies and start recording events with pictures that you can put some narrative to at a later date.

Please keep your articles and photos coming in and if you have any ideas of what you would like to see in your newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Magazine Deadlines

To get into the next issue in July, please make sure your copy gets to the Editor Email address or in any format to Lorraine Reed before the deadline date of

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Please note that articles received after this date will unlikely be included due to production time and printing deadlines.

The cost of the newsletter for 2015 is 75p per printed copy, please speak to your Secretary for details. Every WI is sent an email version to pass onto their members at no charge.

Emailed copies are free of charge and available through your Secretary.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR

June to:

Greenford	11/06/1985	30
Southbourne	03/06/1953	62
Hayes Town	17/06/1993	22



## 200+ CLUB WINNERS

### March

1 <sup>st</sup>	No 39	£44.00	D West, Field End WI
2 <sup>nd</sup>	No 063	£30.00	T McGee, Greenford Eve WI
3 <sup>rd</sup>	No 48	£21.50	Grange Park Evening WI

### April

1 <sup>st</sup>	No 151	£24.00	Laleham Evening WI
2 <sup>nd</sup>	No 221	£16.00	Uxbridge WI
3 <sup>rd</sup>	No 87	£12.00	E Wigington Southbourne WI

(Please speak to your WI Treasurer for more information on the 200 plus club which is available to join annually in October each year.)

## NFWI: 100 Years Membership Survey

To mark the WI centenary, the NFWI is conducting a special one-off survey of WI members. The aim of the survey is to understand the views of WI members on some of the big issues in Britain today, and also to understand what role members think the WI has to play in today's society. The results of this survey will be used to inform the NFWI's future policy and campaigns. The findings will also contribute to a new centenary publication celebrating the WI's historic achievements over the past 100 years and exploring the views and concerns of today's members.

NFWI would really like to make sure that we hear the views of as many WI members as possible. We would therefore be delighted if you would be able to complete the survey using this link:

<https://britainthinks.online-host.solutions/ASP/eWISurvey>

The survey should take around 20 minutes to complete.

Please complete the survey no later than 8th June 2015.

Please note that there are two versions of this questionnaire: the online survey and a postal questionnaire that has been sent out to a random selection of individual WIs. If you have completed the postal questionnaire, please do not also complete an online survey.

All answers to the survey will be treated as confidential.

### **ASHFORD WI member Brenda Mitchell receives The SPELTHORNE CIVIC AWARD**

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April our Secretary Brenda Mitchell received The Spelthorne Civic Award from The Worshipful the Mayor Suzy Webb at The Council Chamber in Staines-upon-Thames. The Civic Award Trust originated in 1982 and honours local people whom the trustees believe have by their outstanding endeavour benefited members of the community.

Brenda was a founder member of Ashford WI which opened its doors 31 years ago in 1984 and since then has held various positions on the committee generally helping to get done what has to be done to make Ashford the thriving WI it is at present. She has also been a committee member of Ashford on the Map for the last eleven years.

For many years on her way to work in the centre of Ashford, Brenda would pass the eyesore that was the War Memorial with weeds in the troughs, weeds surrounding the memorial itself and such a general lack of care that it was an embarrassment to those who had lost their lives during the wars. The only time the Memorial had colour was when it was covered with Wreaths and Poppies on Remembrance Day so once again Brenda decided that something had to be done and after getting the approval of her WI approached the Council and the local British Legion to ascertain whether Ashford WI could take over the memorial planting. Well the Council didn't take long to be convinced and the British Legion were happy with the idea too and it wasn't long before Brenda had organised a gardening team to look after the memorial on a regular basis. She also sourced sponsorship funding and soon the memorial was planted up twice a year and watering was carried out on a rota basis and what had been an eyesore became an asset.

That wasn't enough for Brenda though, at night it was in darkness and being at the centre of a busy junction she had the idea of putting some lighting around the memorial and picking out the Angel at the top of the memorial too. Well, that took a wee bit longer to win the Council over on but she didn't give up and eventually they agreed to do it.

That was 23 years ago and although she doesn't look her age (actually she never tells how old she is) she is still organising the maintenance, planting and changing the colour combination of the plants every year to suit the occasion and generally giving Ashford something to be proud of. Two years ago, Councillor Carol Coleman donated six railing planters to Ashford and requested that Ashford WI take them over too but, without funding, Brenda was at a loss to know how to find the money to plant them up. Brenda isn't at a loss for long though and being a member of Ashford on the Map she approached them for some help. Luckily they agreed to fund the plants for the troughs and planters and hopefully will do so for the near future.

Although Brenda doesn't do the rota watering any more, she is the main organiser of the planting and in 2012 and 2014 Brenda and her team consisting of Kim Daniels-Phillips, Pauline Harrison, Audrey Hartwell, Cathy Hay, Heather McIntyre and Barbara Topping of Ashford WI won the Spelthorne in Bloom Award for the Best War Memorial in Spelthorne.



### **Ashford WI – by Cathy Hay**

It was a relief to all that our President Pat was fit enough to chair our April meeting and as is her style at the end of the business gave an hilarious account of a recent expedition into leafy Wimbledon, a journey she can usually carry out with eyes nearly closed, but on this one occasion caused her no end of trouble – perhaps Pat this is a sign that nobody is exempt from the vagaries of advancing age? We are very lucky to have a gifted poet in our midst in the guise of Jean Lintott who read out her poem entitled “What my WI means to me” - which was sent in to Federation. Well done Jean it was delightful.

Hampton Court, its gardens, maze and surrounding estate was brought to us by our speaker John Garrod who showed us the history of its beginning through photographs and in this the 500 hundred year anniversary of Hampton Court a truly fitting presentation.

We have a lot of interesting events planned for the next few months, starting off with our May meeting when we have renowned author and speechwriter Adrienne Dines. On 11<sup>th</sup> May we have a trip to Wimborne in Dorset, the baton handover at Walton Bridge on 18<sup>th</sup> May, the AGM live at Feltham Cineworld on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2 stalls at Ashford on the Map on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June, Downton Abbey villages tour on the 10<sup>th</sup> June and a trip to Hastings on 6<sup>th</sup> July. Intersperse these events with our summer Open Gardens hopping, monthly coffee mornings, craft, lunch, scrabble, theatre and walking groups and you can see that your social calendar need never be empty if you are a member of Ashford WI.

### **CRAFTY CORNER**



A dangling wedding bouquet with a difference – all buttons made for Emma White of West Ealing WI by one of her fellow members, Lorna Barton-Nicoll.

### **PINNER WI by Mary Peach**

When the speaker had to cancel at Pinner WI in April, Barbara Lanning stepped in at very short notice. She spoke about famous writers who had lived in Harrow at some time in their lives and read extracts from their books. The most famous as Sir Winston Churchill who had been a pupil at Harrow School in his youth.



## **WI Launches Two New Tattoos for Organ Donation Campaign**

~ Campaign challenges old-fashioned image of Great British Institution ~

Members of the Gothic Valley WI, organised themselves to get specially designed tattoos to show they are registered organ donors in support of the National Federation of Women's Institute's (NFWI) 2015 Organ Donation Campaign.

Some members were tattooed on Sunday 29 of March at Kilburn Original Tattoo Studio, 175 Kilburn High Road, London, NW6 7HY. A second session is planned in the next two months. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of April permanent and temporary tattooed members gathered at Lauderdale House for their meeting and were happy to answer questions and pose for photos.

Madeleine Pearce, President of the Gothic Valley WI and long-time Gothic Community stalwart says: "Tattoos provide a permanent indicator of the desire to become an organ donor. With a tattoo, there can be no doubt for medical staff and family members as to the donor's intentions - you know they really meant it!"

"A lot of our members are part of the alternative community, so we felt that a tattoo would be the perfect way for us to express our wishes to donate our organs after our deaths. If seeing the dedication of our members getting a tattoo encourages just one extra person to tell their family that they want to be an organ donor and join the Organ Donor Register, we will have achieved our goal."

There is a shortage of organ donors and three people die every day in the UK in need of an organ transplant. There are 10,000 people in the UK in need of a transplant and one donor can help transform the lives of up to nine people.

Sally Johnson, Director of Organ Donation and Transplantation, NHS Blood and Transplant, said:  
'We are delighted that the WI is encouraging people to talk about organ donation and make their decision known in such innovative ways. With four out of ten families still saying no to organ donation when asked, it's more important than ever that people tell their families they want to be an organ donor. However you do it - over a cup of tea, when you're out walking the dog or like these ladies, by gathering a group of friends and having your intention permanently tattooed, let those closest to you know your decision to donate your organs.'

Marylyn Haines Evans, NFWI Public Affairs Chair, said:  
"WI members really take campaigns to heart and we are always amazed at the huge variety of ways that WI members get involved in such a wide range of issues. Gothic Valley WI members are proving that the WI really is everything that you want it to be. We're looking forward to seeing their campaign tattoos, and believe that their actions will encourage even more people to have such a vital conversation with their families and friends to share their views on organ donation."

Two tattoo designs have been created, in collaboration with local tattoo artist Joe Farrell at Kilburn Original. One is a heart outline with the words 'I am an organ donor', and the other is an anatomically correct heart with a banner across it saying 'Donor'.

The artist has waived copyright on the images, so the designs can be used by any tattoo artist or printer. They are designed to be clearly readable and work in different ink colours so they can be used on a variety of skin tones.



### **HAMPTON WI by Lesley McGrath**

The speaker at our March Meeting was a local gentleman called John Tough. His well-known family have been involved with boats in the area for generations, so he knows the Thames in our area very well. He gave us a fascinating talk about the work of the Teddington Lifeboats, some stories sad and others that made us all laugh. We learned so much, for instance that a huge number of the people who man (& woman!) the lifeboats are volunteers and that the charity receives no money at all from government by choice. They actively don't want it, as they fear becoming entangled in red tape and ending up being run by people who know far less about the rivers and seas than they do. But many hundreds of people each year have a great deal to thank them for. So, next time you are shopping in Teddington or Twickenham and the person serving you suddenly looks a little wild eyed, turns tail and runs away, don't take offence - they could be one of those wonderful volunteers who must live and work within a few minutes of the Teddington Station, who has just received a 'shout'!



### HA:WI BOMB THE PARK!

On Thursday 2nd April a few undercover HA:WI crafty ladies were rumoured to have been on military manoeuvres and yarn bombed their local park. The 'attack' was over the removal of the much loved and needed park keeper from Pinner Memorial Park. The hand crafted little birds were attached to bunting ribbon and strung around key areas of the park. They attracted a lot of attention and drew admiring smiles and praise from park users. Yarn-bombing is a non-aggressive way to protest and support a cause with maximum impact.

### 4th April - FASHION ON A RATION AT THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

HA:WI sisters joined forces with their Cambridge Blue Belle sisters and took a trip up to town to see the Fashion on a Ration exhibition at the Imperial War Museum (on until 31 August 2015). It was a wonderful showcase of how fashion survived and made an impact under the strict rules of rationing in 1940s Britain. Highly recommended.

### FROM THE HEART – HA:WI to donate heart shaped cushions to local cancer hospitals.

The craft group have been busy making over 50 heart shaped cushions to donate to both Mount Vernon and Northwick breast cancer wards, and are still making more.

They are being delivered to women at local cancer wards about to undergo surgery to help relieve pain and give support after surgery and come with a hand-written inspirational message. The heart shape pillow allows the patients arm to rest between the two curves of the heart. This reduces pain by preventing accidental bumps, shoulder tension, under shoulder swelling, and surgical incision pulling. Sleep is a challenge for many breast cancer patients.

Breast cancer patients also report using the pillow to assist with seatbelt comfort. Patients say that they appreciate that people thought of them during their recovery process.



### Iver Evening WI by Sandra Coppen

At our February Meeting, Jonathan Oates, husband of one of our members, and Archivist, gave a talk on unsolved local murders and encouraged the members to try to give clues how they might have been solved.

March was the birthday party and a buffet was enjoyed as was the entertainment by Anne Swaithie.

Unfortunately our speaker for April could not make it, so our Treasurer, Pat Gravette, gave us all a fascinating talk on her life in Africa.

### STANWELL WI - Easter Coffee Morning

Once again Stanwell WI hosted an Easter Coffee Morning, with the proceeds going towards the village baskets for Spelthorne in Bloom. This year was a sell out with not a spare chair in the house! We had a wonderful raffle, Easter Egg Tombola and Guess the name of the doll. There was an EGGcellent Easter Hat parade and the winners were Valerie Turner and Sheila Parslow.



### SUNBURY ON THAMES WI by Bobbie Goodman

Plans for the reception of the 100th birthday baton to this area were discussed at our March meeting. One guest and one new member were welcomed and Jackie Mayall was thanked for holding a successful ploughman's lunch at her home. All our clubs are going well. Both reading groups enjoy lively meetings discussing what they have read, the theatre group found much to think about after a visit to 'Miss Saigon' on April 1st, and the craft group describe themselves as 'small but happy'. The 2nd gathering of the luncheon club appreciated a tasty meal, well presented and nicely served at The Kingfisher by Chertsey Bridge. March business concluded, Colonel J Kimmins then amused and diverted us with anecdotes from his diplomatic life as a Queen's Messenger during the Cold War. He spent much time in Moscow where young diplomats lived in flats and took their meals in the British Embassy. These meals were always lacking in fresh vegetables so when he came on leave he filled his suitcase in Kingston Market and returned with more than his 5 a day. Knowing that your rooms were constantly 'bugged' made taking walks the only way to have a decent conversation, but even then you were always tailed by the KGB. The drabness of China after Mao's Cultural Revolution and the awful food in Cuba at that time, made him thankful to return to the UK.

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### DIGITAL CHAMPION by Lorraine Reed

Are you interested in:

**MFWI Facebook Group Page** – why not ask to join and maybe get to be an admin so you can post things to our WI without the public seeing?

**MFWI Facebook Page** – have you 'liked' the public page? Do you ever look at it? Do you even know what it is?

**Moodle:** do you know what it is?

If not please talk to your WI MCS rep or your committee who have the ability to get you access to this remarkable wealth of information and knowledge. The Moodle is a source of information and help for all WI members. It is something that you need an ID and password for, which is given to you after you have been registered by your MCS representative.

I have to say a year into the WI and I had no idea what this was or what it contained. It is a great shame that new members are told about it by NFWI when they get their membership card etc BUT it means nothing at that stage if you are new to the WI and unfortunately no-one seems to feel it necessary to remind you of its existence.

If anyone wants to know more and their WIs are maybe not that forthcoming, please let me know and I will do my best to help you - Lx

### TWICKENHAM WI by Eleanor Thomas

In March one of our members gave us an amusing talk on her life as an air hostess with Air Canada, covering 31 years. Yvonne Peel knew from the age of 8 that she wanted to fly. In the early days flying was expensive and the preserve of the wealthy. Staff had to be immaculately turned out, not a hair out of place and well made up and naturally had to provide excellent service. Training was rigorous and she continued to be assessed and tested throughout her career. She flew long haul on large carriers and also short flights on small aircraft, often serving the remote Inuit settlements of northern Canada. Her love of flying never waned, although there have been many changes in the flying experience over the years. In the old days there would be dancing on the upper deck of a jumbo on trans-Atlantic flights and animals carried in a hold behind seated passengers at the rear, sometimes to the alarm of people who heard strange noises! Dealing with the public was not always easy and she had many entertaining and also disturbing stories to relate. Another of our members, Eve Whitby, entertained a group of ladies to lunch in her home. We greatly enjoyed the delicious spread she had prepared and time chatting in her lovely garden, in the warm spring sunshine.

### SOUTHBOURNE WI by Brenda Francis

**Social Evening:** Somehow the evening got started without the introduction, the singers in their lovely blue and silver outfits, sang along with music played by Glenys Barker our pianist. They certainly had the interest of the audience.

I myself introduced the evening, followed by Beryl Braithwaite our compare, who everyone loves for joviality and little jokes. The show went on with familiar songs old and new, Shirley Keefe and Maureen Nagle as a duet sung, 'I'm just an old fashioned girl' it was just delightful.

We had a poem recited by Ann Fleming about the love between the Tumbleweed and the Ivy, how she remembered all the words I will never know. Then came the highlight of the night, two songs from Grease. The first was Summer Night, dancing actions with appropriate costumes had the audience in awe. But it was the next act that stunned everyone. Our president who played Sandy appeared in black leggings, black tee shirt and pink stiletto's, while Gloria Parker dressed in black with heavy black boots and a wonderful black wig, a mass of hair. The rest of the team joined them in pretty pink outfits, white ankle socks and pink shoes. They all had so much energy it vibrated around the hall. Everyone was cheering, clapping, cameras were flashing, and videos were running. They were amazing. The audience applauded, there was a standing ovation and everyone called for more. It was not until later that we heard, one of the local WIs has booked them for their birthday meeting, how great is that!!!

The supper was as sumptuous as usual, followed by petite cakes served with tea and coffee. A super quiz with lots of ooh's and aah's at some unbelievable answers. Then finally the Grand Raffle, as the norm some terrific prizes.

Another fantastic evening, enjoyed by many, loved by all. Well Done Southbourne.

**April Meeting:** The evening opened with the joyful theme of Jerusalem. Quite a lot of business to be read, outings and walks being arranged and new book titles for the book club. As our speaker was unable to attend, Maureen Nagle had found someone to jump in at the last minute. George and his wife are the Pearly King and Queen of Newham. George was so enthusiastic there was complete hush throughout the hall. He told us of Henry Croft who spent his early life in an orphanage, at 13 he went to work for the local borough as a road sweeper in the local markets. He soon became friends with the Costermongers, learnt their way of life, their ways, their generosity and Rhyming Slang. Buttons started appearing on Henry's clothes as his status grew. Henry never forgot the children at the orphanage. His charity work grew as he made his first Pearly suit covered with smoke mother of pearl buttons, he collected pennies for many charities such as hospitals, churches, children's homes, the sick and needy.

As London grew so did the Pearly King and Queen Dynasty and the costermongers never let Henry down. Today the Pearly's can be seen at several events such as The New Year's Day parade, at Covent Garden, Columbia Rd flower market, Brick Lane and many more. George and his wife were an absolute delight and instead of our social half hour, we had a sing-a-long of old London songs --- wonderful. By now everyone was ready for their cup of Rosie Lee.



### Hayes Town WI by Marion Batchelor

On Tuesday 21st April we had a joint trip with other local WI members to Rochester, an important and historic town on the main road between London and Dover. We were lucky to have the sun shine on us all day and it was lovely to see the spring flowers and blossom on the trees as we made our way through the Kent countryside. On arrival some of us braved the climb of 113 feet up one of the tallest castle keeps in the country to enjoy the wonderful views over the river Medway. A bit blowy at the top but well worth the effort. Apparently a man took a photo of a ghost while we were there, I expect we would have come down quicker than we went up if we had known! Then into the 900 year old Cathedral to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere and admire the Norman architecture and stained glass windows. Next a bite to eat and a visit to the grand and interesting Guildhall Museum. Charles Dickens used many of the town's buildings in his novels and the Guildhall is described in Great Expectations as where Pip was taken to be bound as apprentice to the blacksmith. The High Street has quaint little shops, many of their names linked to Dickens, such as A Taste of Two Cities, Mrs Bumbles and Tiny Tim tea shops, Sweet Expectations and Peggotty's Parlour! We bought things to remind us of a lovely day out and after a last cup of tea headed home.

### By Gill Wildman

On a warm & sunny afternoon we had a good attendance, for author Robin Bayley who came to speak about "Finding his Secret Family". As a boy his grandmother told him exciting stories, about her father, involving bandits, bags of silver and a narrow escape from a Mexican Revolution!! One day he left his well-paid job to finance a trip to Mexico and follow in his great grandfather's footsteps to track down the village, only to be met by an uncle, which in turn led to 300 relatives that he or his grandmother knew nothing about. Her father unbeknown to her mother, had married a local woman, resulting in a secret family!!

Robin took his grandmother at the age of 90 to Mexico to meet them. Robin is very much in touch with them all via email etc. All this resulted in a book - The Mango Orchard, which took him 5 years to write, there is talk now of it being made into a film with James McAvoy or Leonardo Di Caprio playing himself, so watch this space !! Robin was very entertaining and many ladies bought his book, we would urge other WI s to book this very engaging writer.

At the tea break Rene Bates was given a card and voucher for her 90th birthday and of course Hayes Town ladies sang Happy Birthday finishing off the afternoon with a raffle.



### COW BYRE, THE BARN, RUISLIP - SEPTEMBER 2015 CRAFT EXHIBITION AND DEMONSTRATIONS

By Lorraine Reed, MFCC Chairman

Can I please ask that crafters, young and old, dig around and see if you have anything old, traditional or prize winning articles hidden in cupboards, lofts, archives relating to your WIs.

I would be grateful if you would like an item to be exhibited, if you could send me a photograph with a bit of an explanation/history as I am expecting a lot of interest and need to be able to select a variety of different items across different types of medium to get a good cross section of exhibits. This is not an exhibition of absolutely perfect craftsmanship but one showing what can be achieved by members throughout the ages, which will obviously show the skills along the way so all level of skills are welcome!!! Please bear in mind that you will need to get the items to myself or County Office by Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2015. Items will be returned to my home or County Office on Saturday evening, 19<sup>th</sup> September. Due to my own commitments, I will not be able to return any items to individuals until after 6<sup>th</sup> October. Please talk to me individually to work out what is best for you.

To give you an idea, we shall likely be exhibiting items such as these and will consider anything including fashion knitwear:





### ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING – March 2015

After the welcome from Chairman, Vivien Beckett, information regarding the Baton week of events by Liz Morrell and the business part of the AGM was dealt with, members were treated to a talk from the Metropolitan Police Transport Safety Team followed by Anne Stamper, the NFWI Archivist and a WI member since 1960 serving on Sussex Federation Board of Trustees.

Over the years, Anne has arranged the Archives of the WI which are now housed in the London School of Economics Women's library. She spoke about the WI founded in 1915 not by worthy ladies in tweeds but by the feistiest women in the country, including suffragettes, academics and social crusaders who discovered the heady power of sisterhood, changing women's lives and their world in the process. Its members made jam and sang 'Jerusalem', but they also made history.

With this year being 100 years since the first WI opened in the UK, this is a chance to look back, but as no one has been around for 100 years, the WI have been wonderful at recording the WI and its activities. From the Jubilee Book in 1965, 50 years ago,

Anne read a poem written by the then poet laureate Sir Cecil Day-Lewis, and an excerpt from the very first WI meeting at Llanfair (Wales) WI. This was followed by entries from a Sussex WI minute book, which compared their yearly programme between WIs then and now. We were told about the start of the WI Markets and how the WI came into its own at a time of War, setting up preservation units using fruit (which would have otherwise gone to waste) and with sugar provided by the government of the day. The WI made enough jam to feed the nation for one year. Fascinating facts were told of what the WI has done over time, including the purchase of a college by members and the onset of this most valuable resource, known as Denman College. NFWI had the opportunity to build a 1951 WI House in the Ideal Home exhibition, and this was done with help from all the WI's input around the country. Anne's talk brought us up to 1965 ending with a recital of the poem called The Growing which was specially written for the NFWI by C. Day Lewis, the Poet Laureate, to celebrate the Golden Jubilee Year.

We had the pleasure of listening to the Middlesex Federation entries to the Lady Denman Cup competition 'What My WI Means To Me' from Mrs Lynette Salmon of Sunbury on Thames WI, Ms Jodie Major of Shoreditch WI (read by Mrs Maggie Weatherby) and Mrs Jean Lintott of Stanwell WI. There was an announcement of the winners of Denman Bursary Draw of £100 each which was won by Dill Britain of Hayes and Anna East of Harlington. Thorney Starlets, the winners of the Baton cushion competition were also announced. Well done to everyone.

Entertainment was by Geoffrey Strum and his accompanist Terry Saunders with a variety of Musical, Classical and 'American Song Book' songs. The meeting featured the usual raffle and a 'special' draw of the 200+ Club winners.

During the break, members were able to take a look at various information tables and speak with the Metropolitan Police, our Denman Ambassador – Lesley Yendall, our ACWW representative – Francis Zarifis and Lorraine Reed our Craft Chairman. Publications, headed by Jill Bonar also had WI stationery and gift items available for purchase.



*Opening of meeting with 'Jerusalem'*



*Anne Stamper*



*Metropolitan Police Transport Safety Team*



*Geoffrey Strum*



*All Baton Cushion Competition Entries*



*Thorney Starlets – Baton Cushion Competition 1<sup>st</sup> Prize*