

# CFWI Newsletter

October 2025



## Vice Chair's Chat

I hope you've all had a wonderful summer enjoying the great weather. I noticed on this morning's dog walk that the leaves are starting to change and as much as I'll be sorry to see the summer go, there's something quite cosy about the thought of Autumn (yes, I do love the seasons!) Saying that, I was in a local supermarket the other day and came across a shelf of Christmas food – not sure how I feel about that!! Of course, as we move into Autumn, we have a huge selection of new events coming your way so keep an eye out for the booking forms.

If you have never attended an event organised by the Federation before, I would urge you to try one. I was in the office over the summer when the patchwork day was taking place and it was lovely to not only see the incredible work produced, but also to feel the real buzz of enjoyment coming from the room. Our events are certainly sociable and a great way to meet members from other WI's. We received a lovely email from a member who did one of our trips during the summer and one thing that stood out was how supported she felt through a very difficult time. I've included her email in this newsletter so please read it - the last few words 'I've found a life again through the wider WI and met so many lovely ladies...thank you for making me happy again' says far more about the WI than I ever could.

Of course, we wouldn't be the Federation we are

without our volunteers, and we are grateful to each and every one of them. This year in particular we need more volunteers to join our Board of Trustees as we guide the Federation through the coming years. Currently we have a very small Board, and we cannot possibly



continue long term without extra help. Nomination forms have been sent to secretaries so please consider joining us or at least coming along to meet us to find out more – we really are a friendly bunch!

I can't close my chat without mentioning the WI's Big Birthday. The WI started with its first ever meeting at Llanfairpwll on Anglesey in Wales and this September it celebrated its 110<sup>th</sup> birthday. What a great achievement and I for one feel proud to be part of it. Over 100 of our members attended a celebration day at Audley End on 16<sup>th</sup> September with other Federations and what a fantastic day it was – the sun even shone! We will share pictures in the next newsletter, but I must just add that the singing of Jerusalem by over 500 people was described by someone as 'just magic' which I think sums up the day beautifully.

Wishing you all some fab WI Autumn meetings

**Lesley x**

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Office open Monday and Thursday 10am-1pm and 1.30pm-3pm. Tuesday contactable by email only.  
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# PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Save the date:

**WORLD RESTART  
A HEART  
DAY** **OCTOBER 16<sup>TH</sup>**



World Restart a Heart Day is an international initiative to raise awareness of cardiac arrest and the importance of bystander CPR and defibrillator use. This year's campaign 'Bystanders Can be Lifesavers' is encouraging us all to learn CPR skills and many of your WI's have already held sessions or have promoted online resources such as the British Heart Foundations RevivR app. NFWI is encouraging all WI's to share photos of their sessions, and we would love to see them too. If you are looking for inspiration My WI has lots of ideas of how you can support this important campaign and remember CFWI is holding a CPR and Defibrillator Session on Saturday 18 October where you can learn basic skills in a relaxed environment.

We look forward to seeing you at our session or seeing the pictures of your WI's.

**Public Affairs Team**

## Chesterton Riverside Walk

Back in May WI members came together to enjoy a riverside walk in Chesterton. We met at the Museum of Technology near the main storm overflow from Cambridge into the River Cam. The river is used by many for rowing, pleasure boating etc. and cormorants, mallards, kingfishers, otters and water voles are often seen.



We walked along the historic Stourbridge Common, the site of the biggest medieval fair in the world, taking care to avoid cyclists and scooters. (Our back marker joyfully sounded a hooter to keep these at bay!) We observed Cherry Hinton chalk stream joining the Cam by the railway bridge and the very expensive housing which has replaced the Pike and Eel.

Crossing the river using the new Chisholm Trail Bicycle Bridge, we looked out over Ditton Meadow towards Fen Ditton and then walked back past the Green Dragon pub in Chesterton, dating back to at least 1335. Walking along Ferry Lane we passed Roebuck House where the National Loaf was developed in WW2.

We saw the medieval Chesterton Tower, owned by the Abbot of Vercelli, and then St Andrews Church. Passing the Pye Radio Buildings, we crossed the Olaudah Equiano Bridge to return to our starting point passing over the Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve where, in 2020 after the Covid lockdown over 250 trees were planted many by local WI members.

It was an informative walk enjoyed by all and we are hoping to repeat it in the Spring.

**Janet Peacey and Elizabeth May, East Chesterton WI**

## Message from a WI Member

It's always lovely to hear from our members but in this, our 110th year, we wanted to share this with everyone to show just how much the WI can change our lives. Thank you to the member who shared this and we are so glad you decided to join us.

"I wanted to say how much I enjoyed the trip to Southwold and thank you for organising it. I came with some friends for the second time and it was lovely. One lady had just lost her husband, the funeral was last Thursday, so the trip was of enormous help to her and being a member of the WI has really helped her and me too in fact. I had my mum living with me for 10 years but she developed Alzheimer's which was a difficult time for me. When we lost her 4 years ago in October my life shattered. My saving grace was a fellow member, a wonderful woman that everyone knows. She badgered me into joining 3 years ago and I haven't looked back since.

The WI isn't all jam and Jerusalem (although I wouldn't mind singing Jerusalem a bit more often), it's for women like me. Women that have lost their purpose and ones that struggle facing life. I've found a life again through the wider WI family and I've met so many lovely ladies.

So thank you WI, and thank you ladies for making me happy again.

## Elton Hall

A warm sunny morning saw 32 members and guests setting off to visit Elton Hall and gardens. This little known stately home is just a few miles from Peterborough and still in private hands. On the day of our visit it was closed to the public and only open to tour groups of which we were the only one!

We split into two groups and each group was given a detailed tour of the house. Parts of the house date back to the 12th century, but additional bits have been added over the centuries. The detailed history of the house is somewhat incomplete, but it is known that Elton Hall was built by Sir Richard Sapcote. The current owners the Proby family, bought the Hall in the early 1600s, still live in the house and have done much to the gardens.



About a dozen rooms are open to visitors and each one contains a variety of art and furniture. Artists represented included Turner and Gainsborough. In common with many homes of this type there was an impressive array of family portraits.

After lunch in the adjoining restaurant, members visited the extensive gardens, amazingly looked after by only two and a half gardeners! The garden is divided into a number of areas with plenty of seating to sit and enjoy the view or an ice cream. The Orangery and formal flower gardens were exceptional, but other parts of the gardens were equally impressive.

Next to the restaurant is a large garden centre and many members returned with more than they started the day with!

**Christine and Graham Wyld**

## An Outing of Two Halves

We left Trumpington on an overcast morning with a little drizzle in the air ever hopeful that the weather would brighten up once we reached our destination – Southwold. We had a picturesque journey through some lovely Suffolk villages as the usual route was having traffic problems. We reached Southwold around 11.00am and everyone's first stop was a coffee break, with perhaps a little light refreshment. The High Street of individual shops leads down to the beach and seafront which is backed by colourful beach huts with quirky names. Photo was obviously taken against these. The Promenade leads to the Pier where fishermen grapple with their fishing lines and children scream and laugh on the funfair. Something that is not quite suitable for "ladies of a certain age". The bracing walk on the Pier was followed by the obligatory fish and chips, which were fresh and delicious.



Here ended the first part of our outing and on to the second part of the day.

This involved a visit to the small Summer Theatre which was showing "Gaslight". This was a Victorian melodrama with only three main parts and two minor parts. It really showed what life was like in those times with very overbearing husbands. It was a interesting play and certainly something different. After the play, our coach was waiting for us and we returned home happy if slightly windswept.

A very big thank you to Olive for organising this trip.

**Diane Oakley**

## Spanish Feast

Hola mis amigas!

When I signed up to go to the Spanish Feast, I don't think I had taken the word 'feast' fully on board! We arrived at the WI office in Girton to a room decorated with Spanish flags and red, yellow and black pom-poms and Spanish music playing which gave a lovely festive feel.



There were nibbles of nuts and olives on the table and soon the sangria arrived. We began answering the Spanish quiz questions as a selection of tapas dishes gradually appeared from the kitchen. Meatballs, tortilla, pan con tomato and paella, all served to our table. We tucked in and chattered as we munched.

Then came the main course! Either chicken with raisins and pine nuts or bean stew served with potatoes and tomatoes. This was followed by deliciously sweet watermelon slices and then a creamy Crema Catalan dessert. A small taste of sherry finished off the meal.

We learned a little more about Spanish food as the answers to the quiz were given by Elaine and I now know more than tortilla and paella!

I would not have believed that it was possible to produce so much food from such a small kitchen which bears testament to the wonderful ladies (and I believe a couple of men) who organised and cooked a fantastic feast.

Well done to all who were involved in making a very enjoyable evening!

*Karen Ballantyne, Hardwick WI*

## Lace Talk

We had a wonderful talk last week from Elizabeth Williamson who is a renowned expert on Shetland Lace Knitting which is an endangered craft. Elizabeth also ran a workshop in the afternoon which was enjoyed by all.



## CFWI Quiz

We had fun at the Federation Quiz. Some lovely food platters, quite tricky questions and a lot of chat and laughter.

Congratulations to Barton WI for winning the quiz - and the prize? setting next years!! Balsham came second and Milton third.

Thank you to everyone who attended and to all the those who worked so hard to make the quiz possible.



## OUT & ABOUT

We were saddened to hear about the passing of Vicki Reti last month. Vicki has edited Out and About for the last two years and has also been an active member of the Federation. We would like to dedicate this edition of Out and About to her and we send our condolences to her family.

### STAPLEFORD WI

Our members have enjoyed a summer of outings, a barbecue, involvement in the village weekend, and excellent speakers at meetings. In June a coach took members to Southend where we walked or travelled by train along the pier before enjoying lunch on the sea front. In the afternoon we visited Leigh-on-Sea where some members sampled cockles after a walk through the cobbled streets. Later that month members ran a highly successful hoopla stall at the village show on an extremely hot day! Our annual barbecue, held in a beautiful garden in Stapleford, was a delightful occasion with delicious salads and desserts provided by members, and with meat cooked by our host and his assistant chefs. Speakers at monthly meetings have been well received and thanks are due to our committee member, Yvonne Allison, who arranges these. We can recommend Nigel Sutton who spoke about Cyber crime, and Judith Large who told us about Shepreth Hedgehog Hospital.

**Joyce Dobson**

### HEYDON AND GREAT CHISHILL WI

Brian Thurlough is thoroughly professional. It is easy to see that he was in the theatre running his own company and then educational productions. Brian enacted the role of a young boy from Bethnall Green who was evacuated at the outset of war. It was known as the phony war..

We were treated to an entertaining and informative one man production.

**Ann Crawford**

### NEWTON WI

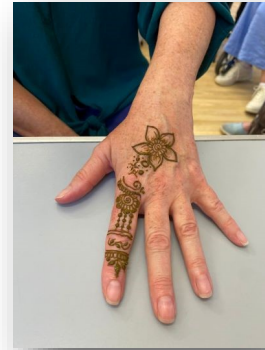
Barbara Biggs 60 years of Newton WI membership. Earlier this year, Newton WI were delighted to celebrate a special anniversary of one of our ladies. Barbara Biggs has been a member of Newton WI for 60 years and we celebrated with bubbly and a special cake. Barbara has been a huge support to our group over her amazing 60 years and has taken on various roles on the Committee including President for many years. Her constant and unwavering support has, we are sure, been a contributing factor to Newton WI's continued success and steady growth in membership. Here is a photo of Barbara and one of her original Membership card from 1965!

**Louise Peden**



### CHRISHALL WI

For Chrishall's July meeting we welcomed Azba Saeed and her young daughter, Izna, to talk about Henna hand painting. We were very grateful to Azba as she stepped in at short notice because our booked speaker was unable to give her talk. She gave us a short power point presentation on the history of Henna then demonstrated on four of our members' hands. Azba is Indian and grew up in India. She told us how her grandmother used to grind her own Henna powder. Henna is a pain free, temporary body art which stains cherry-red to brown colour varying with the time the paste is left on.



We learnt the art of Henna, called Mehndi (or Mehandi) in Hindi and Urdu has been practiced in Pakistan, India, Africa, and the Middle East for over 5000 years. It's the traditional art of painting the hands, feet or body with a paste made from the powdered, dried leaves of the henna plant (Botanical name: Lawsonia Inermis).

**Jane Gravett**

### HISTON AND IMPINGTON WI

A local architect Tim Brading gave a fascinating talk on the styles of architecture within Histon and Impington. He started however by talking of famous buildings and their particular features. One interesting fact was that the rule of thumb concerning the ratio between width and height of a building has not changed in hundreds of years. We then had a virtual tour of Histon and Impington where Tim pointed out examples of the various forms of architecture of familiar buildings.

A really good talk

Crime writer Philip Caine gave a fascinating insight into his career progression from Barrow to Baghdad and back again. Philip was born and brought up in Barrow in Furness and his family expected him to go into the ship building industry but he decided that this was not for him. He chose to start his working life as a cook in the hotel business. After this he spent ten years working on the oil rigs in the North Sea. Employment in the oil business in Dubai and Baghdad followed. Philip told many fascinating anecdotes of his time there and his meeting with some dubious characters. He 'retired' in 2015 and commenced a career in writing and public speaking.

An inspirational speaker.

**Mary Law**

## HARDWICK WI

Summer has ended and we start our new autumn programme with a talk by one of our members of her role in the Womens Royal British Legion – think this will be very interesting.

We ended the summer with a Bring and Share evening – no midgets and lots of different varieties of food – not many bags of crisps either! This social was attended by 32 members and we all had a very entertaining evening.

Some of our members are more active than others – some went on a walk round Wandlebury Country Park looking at trees!-ending up in a cafe, of course. Some members visited Newnham college gardens which ended in a cafe! and some members went to Newmarket Races which was great fun.

We continue with an outdoor theme as a group of us are doing a walk round Cambridge City Centre looking at the Dinky Doors, I think we will end up in a pub this time!

**Naomi Roy**

## DUXFORD

In June one of our members, Evelyn Nallen, led us through the long and rich history of the recorder. Evelyn's talk was extremely well-researched and illustrated with slides, movie clips and playing of real recorders. The presentation was concluded with Evelyn, accompanied admirably by another of our members, Valerie Catton, on piano, playing Burlesca Alla Rumba by Gordon Jacob. There were questions that only musical people could understand. What a good evening! Evelyn gave a brief idea of her talks to a CFWI speakers showcase, so you should have her details. We've had two of her talks now and both have been really interesting.

In July Mary Dicken and Tim Wreghitt, Trustees of the Challis House Trust, with accompanying slides, presented a history of the Challis family Starting with Thomas Challis (1754-1816), a farmer and shoemaker, and ending with Mary Challis, who died in 2006, leaving the house in trust to the village of Sawston. Mary Challis, born 17 Aug 1925, gained her BSc (Hons) in horticulture, before returning to Sawston, where she remained – immersing herself in village life. Mary was a keen photographer and lover of cats. She kept bees and chicken and produced eggs, vegetables and fruit. She took on the role of village archivist, diligently seeking items. This work became the basis of what is now the Challis archive and is entrusted with treasured gifts from Sawston people. The Challis House Trust owns some premises in Sawston, the rents of which contribute to running costs, but an entirely volunteer labour force has carried out the extensive renovations that have made the house and gardens a great place which now hosts exhibitions, outreach students and an annual horticultural show alongside being open to the public several days a week. It would make a good place for Wis to visit.

**Lesley Hale**

## MILTON WI



We had a wonderful start to the summer season at our July meeting. Our speaker was Alison Moore displaying and talking about “ Miniature World of Dolls Housing”, such an enjoyable evening. We started with the dolls house she had as a child and then on to all the dolls houses she has collected and acquired over many years. We had the opportunity to look at several wonderful houses she brought with her. It is amazing the techniques Alison has taught herself over the years when repairing the dolls houses, as you can see from the photo.

**Lorraine North**

## BARTON WI

If anyone is wondering what more she should know about the camera system on her iPhone, then Kevin Pigney's talk on "How to get the best out of your iPhone camera" is for her. Android camera systems are different but the main principles of using a mobile phone camera should be very similar. Beginning with a few hints on how to compose a good image, Kevin then took his audience through several of the numerous possibilities offered by an iPhone camera, ranging from wide angle through panoramic, Portrait and selfie bursts. He discussed some of the many functions of the editing system, showing how changes to light, colour, depth, focus, size etc can be made by someone who knows her way around the system. He finished his talk by showing a series of beautiful images he had taken on a visit to Glencoe and the Isle of Skye.

**Ann Killen**

## EARLYBIRDS WI

In July, we had Amanda Sutherland come and give us a talk called “Make do and Mend”. Amanda did BTEC and HND in fashion design at London College of Fashion. Has been Head buyer at London's Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Amanda gave us a talk how to give your tired clothes a new look. A poncho made into a skirt. Corsage made out of a man's tie. Jacket used for a wedding, had a man's shirt attached with cuffs and sleeves as a band to attach jacket to shirt. Pockets of jackets turned into handbag, strap made out of a man's tie, lined with a shirt. Certainly, an eye opener and made you think what you can do with your own clothes before rushing to your local charity shop.

**Gillian Taylor**

## BALSHAM WI

The July meeting took us back to the 1980s. The presenters reminded us of world events such as the AIDS epidemic, Chernobyl disaster, fall of the Berlin Wall and the Falklands War. Closer to home we also had the Royal weddings, the Miners' Strike and Live Aid. During this period the WI had many resolutions concerning health and were one of the first organisations to support AIDS research. Locally Balsham WI were very engaged with their competition entries to the East of England Show, local produce shows, and entering floats into the village carnival. There was a thriving rounders team and some very crafty members, as well as a committee of 15! One of these left the Christmas party early one year with labour pains and had a baby within the hour – her husband returned before the end of the meeting with the birth announcement.



2025 is the centenary year of Balsham WI, and to commemorate this important occasion we held a celebration afternoon tea. Past and present members were all invited, as were the Clerk and Chairman of Balsham Parish Council, Councillor Geoff Harvey of South Cambs District Council and Reverend Kathy Bishop and Reverend Hannah Threlfall from Holy Trinity Church. Helen Williams and Elaine Bailey from CFWI also attended.

Following welcome remarks from the current president, the attendees joined together in a rousing rendition of Jerusalem. We then made a toast to the continuing success of Balsham WI. While enjoying their home cooked goodies and tea there was a slide show highlighting some of what Balsham WI had been doing in the past 100 years. We also had on display some memorabilia from a member of 50 years standing, and also some other notable items including a list of all the founding members, a tablecloth made for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1985 featuring embroidered names of all the members at the time, and of course, our 100 year certificate. The meeting ended with a short speech from our vice president. All participants appeared to have enjoyed the afternoon and the memories it bought for some of them.

**Debbie Mower**

**Thank you for your reports this month.  
Please can you send items for the December  
newsletter to [office@cfwi.co.uk](mailto:office@cfwi.co.uk)  
by Thursday 6 November.**

## Booking CFWI Events

Please book via



Members who prefer not to make a booking online have two other options.

**TicketSource Telephone Box Office Service** – by calling 0333 666 3366 or

**By Post** - Cash or cheque sent to the CFWI Office with written contact details.

## NEW EVENTS

**CHRISTMAS TRY IT DAY**

**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION WITH BRUNCH**

**BOOKING STARTS MONDAY 6 OCTOBER**

For further information please see attached flyers.

Events also advertised on our  
[website](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cfwi) and [ticketsource](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cfwi).

## OTHER EVENTS AVAILABLE TO BOOK

(See back page for closing dates)

**CPR AND DEFIBRILLATOR AWARENESS SESSION**

**PJ BOTTOMS GUIDED SEW ALONG**

**“THE RED SHOES” BALLET**

[TicketSource Link](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cfwi)

## PLAY THE CAMBRIDGE FEDERATION LOTTERY

The WI Lottery is an exciting weekly fundraiser drawn every Saturday Night. Support the WI with 40p from the sale of each ticket coming back to the Federation.

Each ticket has a **1:50 chance** to win a prize each week, with a top prize of £25,000.

A winning ticket is potentially a week away, we thank you for your continued support. If you haven't signed up yet visit our page -

<https://www.thewilottery.co.uk/support/cambridge-federation-of-wis>

## Dates for your Diary

DATE	EVENT AND TIME	VENUE	CLOSING DATE
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
9	Knitting & Stitching Show	Alexandra Palace	CLOSED
11	Fused Glass Workshop - 10am-12.30pm	CFWI Office	FULL
15	Autumn Lunch - 12.15 for 12.30pm	CFWI Office	25 September
18	CPR & Defibrillator Awareness Session - 10am-12	CFWI Office	11 October
20 & 21	Hidden Cambridge Walking Tour	Cambridge	FULL
31	PJs Sewing Class	CFWI Office	10 October
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
1	PJs Sewing Class	CFWI Office	10 October
22	<b>Christmas "Try it Day"</b>	CFWI Office	5 November
<b>DECEMBER</b>			
4	Thursford Christmas Spectacular	Thursford	CLOSED
15	<b>Christmas Celebration with Brunch</b>	Oakington Pavilion	4 December
<b>JANUARY</b>			
15	"The Red Shoes" Ballet	Sadler's Wells Theatre	1 October
20	Winter Warmer Lunch	CFWI Office	TBC
26	Slow Cooker Demo/Lunch	CFWI Office	TBC
<b>FEBRUARY</b>			
14	Stash Buster Coffee Morning	CFWI Office	TBC
23	Jigsaw Challenge	TBC	TBC
<b>MARCH</b>			
17	Ceilidh	TBC	TBC

**Craft, Coffee and Chat sessions will be held on 14 & 23 October  
in the CFWI Office 11am-3pm.**

Events in bold are new on TicketSource this month. TBC stands for to be confirmed. Further information can be accessed from the events page on our website using the following link [view CFWI events](#) here.

### CFWI Annual Meeting 2026

Please note that the date has changed to  
Monday 27 April 2026  
Further details to follow

### 200 Club Winner

August  
Maureen Bloss, Harston WI

### CFWI Helpline for October

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### Safeguarding Officer

Lesley Challands - [cfwisafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:cfwisafeguarding@gmail.com)

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