



Cover photo
Shaldon & Ringmore WI
See page 7

Help Wanted

DFWI will be running the tea tent at Torbay Pride on Saturday 2nd September 2023

If you could help in any way please get in touch

marie.rhodes@devonwi.org.uk



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Publisher

Devon Federation of Women's
Institutes
Printed by Brightsea Print Group.

Items for May issue by April 11th 2023

Please send items to
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*The opinions expressed in Devon WI
News are not necessarily those of the
Devon Federation of Women's Institutes .*

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CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT



Dear Members,

March comes in like a lion..... as the saying goes, and that definitely seems the case this year, although luckily we are lucky to live in a part of the country that has missed the worst of the weather and I have to own up and say I am writing this while having a week off in Tenerife – temperature today was 27 degrees and very sunny, sorry!



Our subscriptions are due in April. The increase of £2 in today's current financial situation has many members asking what they get for their money and whether to continue their membership.

Just as a gentle reminder :-

- * 11 meetings a year completely free to members
- * a fun and welcoming place to make friends and join in a range of activities
- * A variety of speakers
- * Newsletters
- * Coffee, tea, biscuits and sometimes even cake or other modest refreshments at every meeting
- * 10 copies per year of Devon News, either digitally or hard copy
- * Events, activities and workshops – Craft Groups, Book Clubs, Gardening Groups etc.
- * Educational visits
- * And, of course, fun and friendship!

Just to highlight a few reasons!

Don't forget – Spring Council April 26th with Floella Benjamin. See you there.
Best wishes

Evelyn

Evelyn Watson
Devon FWI Chairman

300+ Club winners

March	
412	Wellswood WI
209	Ashreigney WI
162	Georgeham & Croyde WI
202	West Down WI
149	Pinhoe Evening WI

Update on 300 Club

In last month's issue it said that the application for the 300+ Club was with your Secretary. This was not the case, sorry.
The 300+ Club will be relaunched at Spring Council with bigger prizes and an opportunity to win more at next year's Spring Council.
Look out for details.

Treasurer's tasks and tips

I want to start with an apology. In my tasks and tips last month I wrote of changing your financial year to end in December and this caused anxiety amongst many of you. The reason for this recommendation was to ensure that your accounts were completed in good time before your Annual meeting, also giving time to IFEs to examine them.. Your subs would mostly be within the financial year covered which means that those who collect them early would not have to worry about holding on to payments until their new year started. If you prefer to leave things as they are, please do.

DFWI BACS details are on the right. Please remember to email the person you are paying and copy in Beverley our DFWI bookkeeper. bookkeeper@devonwi.org.uk

Devon Federation of Womens Institutes
Sort code 08-92-99
Account no 67185081



Spring is coming.....

And so are lots of opportunities for members to explore new options. Finally, it feels like there is a new confidence around following the devastation of the last three years during the Covid Pandemic and subsequent vaccination programmes. I would urge all members to explore the opportunities beyond your own WI's activities.

How about joining in with craft activities, attending the Spring Council Meeting, going on Federation holidays or trips, group meetings, walking activities, birdwatching, the opportunities are endless! Keep an eye open for activities advertised by the Federation in the newsletter, on the website and information sent out to all WI Secretaries each month. Remember the WI is what you each make of it!

A little reminder!

With Annual Meetings and election of committees coming up we all need to consider OUR role as a member. Your committee invest a lot of time and effort to make the WI the place you want to be, and it is important to remember that it isn't enough to think " Well I have paid my subs, I have come out for the evening/afternoon now entertain me". There are lots of little jobs which make running the WI meeting easier and pleasurable without necessarily being on the committee. Find out what your committee does and what you can offer to ensure the continued success of your WI.

Workshops are open to all and give an insight into the running of a WI, attending one isn't a commitment to join the committee but might highlight something you could offer now and again or regularly.

The Annual Meeting is an opportunity to enjoy some extra social time with members, so try and organise a fun and engaging activity such as a beetle drive, game, tasting session or quiz.

Spring Council Meeting

This is just a reminder to look out for the Membership Support stall at this year's Spring Council Meeting. The Advisers will be on hand to answer any questions you may have, and especially to demonstrate how to access and navigate My WI. Information about upcoming workshops and events will be available also, so come and meet and greet us.

MY JOURNEY as a Trainee Advisor

Well, I have now completed all 4 Modules for the course. Some have been challenging and some exciting. The meetings on Zoom have been wonderful and our two trainers, Yvonne and Catherine have guided us through the minefield of the work we will undertake. Their patience knows no bounds.

We are about to go to Oxford for our residential section of the training. We have been split up into groups and each have a presentation to undertake. Our group is organising a Formation Meeting and then planning for the actual Formation Meeting. We have loads of ideas and have borrowed slides and papers from other Advisors (no need to reinvent the wheel)! And all now well prepared.

Once all our assignments have been marked and verified by the Accreditation assessor, we will hopefully be passed by the Board in April/May 2023.

I want to thank my fellow Advisors on the MS committee for all their help and guidance, hints and tips too. Most valuable. Liz Roberts, Adviser in Training.



The Membership Communication System (MCS) is the most important tool at all levels of the WI.

Therefore it is important that the information stored there is accurate.

An important reminder to ALL MCS Reps is to contact me in the first instance if you have ANY query about negotiating the database - and do it straightaway, please don't waste time possibly fretting about what to do. Just remember:

T Together
E Everyone
A Achieves
M More

Even a small team!

Jenny Roberts, Federation MCS Co-ordinator : mcsinfo@devonwi.org.uk

Microsoft 365 rollout—next stages

Your WI Secretary will have received information about the rollout of Office 365 including the WI email addresses. From 1st May all correspondence from DFWI will go to your Devon WI email address.

Everyone is offered help and support to use this and more information will be sent out. Please ask for the support and training that you need.

Committee Information and Roundup

Over the next few months we will be reviewing the committees and you may see changes in the reports from them. Do step up if you think you could contribute—most meetings are via Zoom and help can be given to use this.

ENVIRONMENT & RURAL AFFAIRS

Hello did you enjoy the Great British Spring Clean in March? I know that some WIs took part in a litter pick, which of course is great news as Keep Britain Tidy (the original) was a WI campaign in 1954 - yes I know litter is still a big issue and one that we will continue to work against.

In May we have two things to consider and they are linked. One is World Bee Day on the 20th and the second is the No Mow May initiative to help the wildflowers and in particular to benefit our pollinators. By not mowing your lawn it is possible that nectar could be provided for 10 times more pollinators than if you did mow it. Take a look around your area too as many churches and councils are now involved in this initiative. Both of these can also be considered as supporting our own SOS Bumblebees campaign which the WI launched in 2009 .

For more information you can look online <https://www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns/key-and-current-campaigns/sos-for-honeybees>



INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE

All the votes from the Devon Federation of WIs were sent to NFWI to be included with the votes from all the other Federations. The result was as follows and that resolution will go forward to the 2023 Annual Meeting to be voted on by our delegates.

Results:

2022/23 resolutions	Selections received
Save our water - every drop matters	23,326
"Women to Women - turning over a new leaf in the lives of women tea workers"	8,045
Online gambling harm: time for action	25,164
<i>Clean rivers for people and wildlife</i>	36,736
Total selections received	93,271

Clean rivers for people and wildlife

Water quality in our rivers is shameful. Legally, designated bathing waters must be regularly monitored for pollution. The NFWI urges its members, the wider public, local authorities and Government to make, support and promote applications for official designated bathing sites on appropriate stretches of rivers in their area. This will be as instrumental to the clean up of rivers as it has been for water quality improvement at coastal beaches.

Many of our members here in Devon felt that this resolution was especially relevant to the county and DFWI would like to hear from any individuals or WIs who are willing to join in this potential campaign. Do get in touch or come and talk to us at Spring Council .

COMBINED ARTS COMMITTEE

We are looking forward to meeting you all on 26th April at the ERC Centre in Torquay.

Come along to our stand and find out the winners of the St George's Trophy and the Radio Devon Cup.

We would like to have a Dance and Drama event next year, possibly a one act play competition .Please tell us if this something you would be interested in .

SPORT and LEISURE COMMITTEE

As you read this the Pamper Days at Exeter College have ended but many ladies enjoyed a range of treatments and an excellent lunch provided by students. Pictured are some members having manicure and pedicure treatments. Other options included massages.

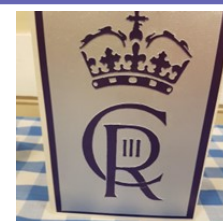


FOOD, CRAFT AND SKILLS SUBCOMMITTEE

The 11th Annual Meeting of the Dart Bay F C & S Area was well attended with members from 8 WIs. Jan Waring from the FC&S committee attended.

After reports were read, Vicky Bundy de mystified defibrillators for us all. Everyone then enjoyed a superb Buffet. Jackie Bufton won the competition for a Coronation card .

It was an excellent meeting which was the first for three years



Update on A Challenge for all WIs in Devon

Three more WI made contact regarding their support for the crafting challenge—Musbury & Whitford WI, Atherington & Umberleigh WI and Post Meridien WI. There may be others who joined in but the sheer volume of goods at The Firs in early March was astounding (and not all had arrived.). It would have been an impossible task to check names off. The WI working together produces an incredible result.

Musbury & Whitford WI made and sold their goods locally as they were unsure about getting them to The Firs. They then made contact to send a cheque to the Hospice rather than goods for Westpoint.



The variety of items made by you is amazing too from patchwork to paper goods, knitted or crocheted bits, and painted or crafted items. It is impossible to show everything but I will take photos at Westpoint too.

On the left are some of the bagged and boxed goods at The Firs waiting for collection. On the right are shells and driftwood goods decorated by Beer WI. Thanks to all of you who made items, acted as collection points, took things to The Firs or bought items that gave money to the Hospice.

If your WI has still not been mentioned and should have been please let me know. By the time you read this the show will have taken place and we hope to have the final total raised at Spring Council.



Ashburton WI Bursary

For many years Ashburton WI used to award an annual bursary to enable a Devon WI member to attend a course at Denman College.

Times have changed and so has Denman. We would like to continue to award an annual bursary but we also are making some changes.

The award will be for £250 which will allow a Devon WI to organise an experience for one, a group or all of their members which follow the WI objectives of education, sustainability, health and citizenship.

This could be a visit to an exhibition, a craft or art workshop, a visit to parliament or a climate conference or a special speaker. I expect you can think of other ideas.

Ashburton WI would like to invite WIs to apply by letter or email explaining

- what their project is,
- when they are planning for it to happen,
- who in their institute will be involved
- how much it will cost.

Applications should be submitted by 31st July 2023.

The successful WI will be notified and the outcome will be published in October 2023.

As we are aiming to help the less well off institutes we would appreciate knowing a bit about your background finances.

Please send your application by letter to

Jenny Beuker
 Ashburton WI Secretary
 2, Headborough Road
 Ashburton
 TQ13 7QP

Or by email to ashburton@devonwi.org.uk

This relaunch will be raised at the Devon Federation of WIs Spring Council in Torquay on 26th April.

Admission Bags for Derriford Hospital.

If you can help **Down Thomas & Heybrook Bay WI** collect items for their Derriford Hospital link please bring your items to the ERC when you come for Spring Council. More details are on the flyer sent this month. If you know of similar schemes elsewhere in Devon please let us know and we will try to help support these too.



These items are for the Glenbourne Unit Acute Mental Health Department.

Cofton W I welcomed Henrietta Olsson of the Children's Hospice South West to their meeting on 8 March.

Members from neighbouring Institutes also came along to hear Henrietta's talk about the wonderful work done by the charity.

Together we were able to present Henrietta with a large selection of craft work to be sold by the Hospice at the forthcoming Craft Fair at Westpoint.

We were also able to make a donation of £107 raised by those attending the meeting.

Pictured are Judith Greenhough, Cynthia Somerfield, (who is a former Adviser) Rita Nebbett (DFWI Vice Chair), Henrietta Olsson and Pauline Bloomfield with some of the items.



Everyone seemed to enjoy the session and learnt a lot.

News from WIs

Lewtrenchard WI have been taking part in “Show the love” for 4 years. They have usually decorated the bus shelters in Lewdown & Stowford but this has often been a battle with high winds, rain and very cold weather. This year they asked the local post office shop if they could decorate one of the windows .



It was a pleasure for the WI and hopefully raised awareness in the local community.



The ladies of **Combe Martin WI** have been busy knitting strips and squares which have been crocheted and sewn together to make blankets to go to Ukraine along with knitted clothing for the babies.

North Tawton WI were entertained and educated by Caroline from DeBora Lingerie in Exeter recently . The competition was to



decorate a bra and the attached photo shows the winning entry by Mary Bastin. Caroline was asked to judge the competition and she chose this one because she said it just made her laugh.

Harracott WI were very pleased to present a cheque for £735.00 at their March meeting to Nicky Geddes, a trustee of Families in Grief. F.I.G is a bereavement charity based in North Devon, who provide help and support to children, teenagers and families following a bereavement.

Fund raising during 2022 included a strawberry cream tea.

‘Harracott Rocks’ Christmas concert and a generous donation from Yarnscombe Village bingo. We also raffled a beautiful crocheted blanket, made by a member of our supportive local community.



High Bray and Charles WI are a WI in North Devon on the edge of Exmoor. They have recently held a Craft day in the Village Hall and have sent some photos in to inspire us all. They were also lucky that when a speaker cancelled at short notice they were able to run a Skittles evening instead. I’m sure many of us would love that to be an opportunity. Other activities that they run are meeting once a month to walk, have lunch together, they enjoy book club and get involved in County events



Exbourne, Sampford Courtenay & Jacobstowe WI enjoyed a very entertaining talk by Rt. Hon. Ann Widdecombe at their March meeting. Her talk was entitled 'Life and Times' which included her Strictly Come Dancing experiences and her numerous television work. She gave us anecdotes of her time in Parliament, including her views on Brexit. There were some interesting questions at the end including whether she would consider taking part in Dancing on Ice next! Ann has had a very full and interesting life and members were thrilled to see the many books she has written.



Chudleigh W.I held a celebration for Stella Fernyhough as she celebrated 75 years as a W.I member. Stella joined the W.I. as a girl of 15. (Now you cannot join until you are 18). She came to Chudleigh W.I. in 1956 and has held lots of positions throughout the county, including County Chairman, VCO, Denman Rep, Group Secretary, as well as Chudleigh President and Secretary many times. We had a lovely afternoon tea and Stella (pictured on the right) cut her celebration cake, alongside Barbara Chisnall (on the left), another long standing member and friend. Many congratulations to Stella. Is this a record or are there any members who have been longer in the W.I.?

Post Meridian WI welcomed Newton Bushel Cotswold Morris whose dancers and musicians gave them an evening of social history, fun, laughter, not to mention a bit of exercise for those who accepted the invitation to join in the last dance. Much confusion followed! Their spokesman Steve outlined the many origins of folk and Morris dances, going back to the Moorish people and developing through to present times with diverse styles of dance and musical accompaniment adopted by the people of particular regions of the country. Steve demonstrated some of the "stepping" moves, playing along with basic penny whistle and drum, Anglo concertina, one row melodian then slightly larger accordion. Through the ages the tunes had to be put to memory as most of the players were unable to read, or to write, music. He gave possible explanations for the bells, hankies, sticks and arm movements which represent the Cotswold style of Morris. Bells etc may have been to scare evil spirits or other threats and the sticks might just have a fertility connection. Newton Bushel Morris are a mixed side and it was explained that ladies have long been involved in the Morris tradition. This has in particular been the case following WW1. when so many of the menfolk were lost in battle. The WI really enjoyed the music, dance and information.

Happy 50th Birthday Bishopsteignton WI!

At our March meeting we celebrated our 50th Birthday. Although the WI in Bishopsteignton was first formed in 1938 the current Institute has been in existence since 1973.

We were delighted to welcome all our members and also visitors from other local WIs within our Teignside Group. Also attending were the Chairman, Evelyn Watson, and Vice Chairman, Rita Nebbett, from the Devon Federation of Women's Institutes and our WI Adviser, Maureen Hunter.

We were entertained with a singalong of 60's and 70s hits. Everyone boisterously joined in, singing along to many old favourites.

An afternoon tea was served along with dessert and tea or coffee. As it was difficult to decide who should cut the birthday cake a lucky dip of members names was made and the winner was June Plunkett. We toasted our Institute with a glass of something fizzy and a slice of delicious birthday cake, which was a great way to end the afternoon.

Photograph below of June cutting the birthday cake!



Shaldon & Ringmore WI enjoyed a visit to The Garden House at Buckland Monachorum near Yelverton recently. They went to experience the Snowdrop Walk and were amazed at the variety of flowering plants on show. The ladies had a guided walk led by the Head gardener and saw different varieties of snowdrops, camellias, hellebores, miniature narcissi and leucojem (similar in appearance to snowdrops but a different genus) among others. All agreed that visits at different times of year would be essential to fully appreciate the grounds.



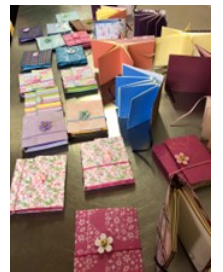
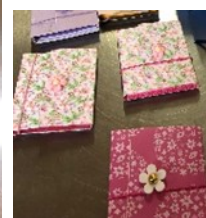
Some of the sights on the day (see cover photo too)



St Marychurch WI have many subgroups which includes a thriving craft group. In March the craft group featured notebooks and all members made a handy pocket pouch for their handbag.

Some of the more adventurous members then made a star photo album.

Everyone went home proud of their achievements.



Dates for your diary		
Activity	Date	Closing date (if relevant)
Topsham Walk	19 April 2023	Closed
St George's Day Trophy (photographs)	Will be Awarded at Spring Council	
Radio Devon Cup (writing)	Will be Awarded at Spring Council	
Molly Nosworthy Trophy	Will be Awarded at Spring Council	
Chairman's Rose Bowl	Will be Awarded at Spring Council	
DFWI Spring Council Meeting at Torquay RICC	26 April 2023	31 March 2023
NFWI Annual Meeting Cardiff	25 May 2023	January 2023
Speakers Showcase Day	27 June 2023	31 May 2023
DFWI will be at Torbay Pride	2 September 2023	
DFWI holiday in Wales	October 2023	TBC
NFWI Annual meeting Royal Albert Hall	5 June 2024	TBA

The list above shows all events that we know about to date. For information on a specific event see elsewhere in this Devon News, contact the relevant committee, look on our website devonwi.org.uk, or contact The Firs .

Events and Refunds. Please note when booking events we cannot give refunds unless we have to cancel them. If we were to refund one WI member who could not attend for valid reasons we would have to refund everyone who becomes unable to go. We could then find ourselves in the situation where DFWI was having to subsidise the trip and we cost them to make sure we break even. It is a balancing act when planning as we do not know if we will have sufficient take up. It is your responsibility to sell your places on.

Annual Meeting Resolution votes

Could all delegate link secretaries please ensure that all secretaries in their link know where to send their voting preference for the Resolution being debated at the Annual Meeting. It may be very late for some WIs to leave it to their Annual Meetings to make their decision regarding which way to vote so if this is the case please make sure it is discussed in time.

Speakers Showcase Day

The first Speakers Showcase Day since lockdown is on Tuesday 27th June at Longdown.

Details are with your WI secretary now.

The team working on the Speakers List will arrange future events in other areas but we hope this event will be well supported.

If you or someone you know would like to audition please contact

roz.matterface@devonwi.org.uk

WI Insurance

All WIs are covered for their normal meetings and for stalls at fetes etc. Most additional groups are covered such as craft, walking, book group etc. Anything extra eg climbing, parachute jumps would have to be additional cost requested specifically or under the trainers.

WIs are also covered under Public Liability Insurance for any goods they may sell at fetes or provide at meetings

They are also covered under their Employer Liability Insurance for asking volunteers to move chairs etc or help in the kitchen.

Some WIs still believe that members cannot help in the kitchen if they are over 80. This is not true. All ages are covered.

Another Covid casualty— Our Centenary Challenge

Before lockdown, DFWI set a challenge to do something for nature so Lewtrenchard WI decided to create a nature trail on a piece of land in the centre of Lewdown which, back in the 1890's, had been given to the community for the use of the children. The project has been protracted, like many things, due to Covid.

Apart from some grass cutting, nothing had been done with the area, known as The Rampsonwillis, for over a century. At the far end there is a copse with a spring and over the years this area had been used as a dumping ground for garden waste. Lonicera hedging had really taken hold and they had to remove over 20 dumpy bags full. They then spent a very enjoyable meeting making bird and bat boxes from kits made up by one of their members, Karen Alexander, and these are now in place. They have also been raising funds for a picnic table for the grassy area to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and have recently planted a rowan tree for the Queen's Green Canopy. The area has now become a real asset to the village. At present they are in the process of creating a website so that children can scan a QR code to find what to look out for on the trail.



Member Margaret Perkin planting the tree with Margaret Dunn, their president, watching.



Articles wanted for Devon News

Some WIs mention that "the same WIs are always in Devon News" or "My WI never gets printed". I try to include any WI who sends in articles but this is a bit like the National Lottery—you have to be in it to win it. Sometimes I trawl social media but much prefer that WIs send articles in. Some WIs send in lots and I do tell them that I can't publish all of their articles—but it helps me when nothing else comes in. If your WI hasn't featured at all or recently please send me something. If I need more information I will let you know. news@devonwi.org.uk