# DEVON WI NEWS

September 2025 Year 105 Issue 140 Cost 35p



**Meet your newly elected Devon Federation Board**

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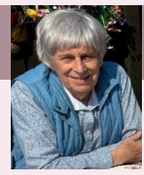
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# CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT



*Dear Members*

Firstly, I want to thank our outgoing Trustees for navigating the Federation through the dark days of Covid and the consequent difficulties. Without their sterling efforts, the Federation may well not have survived. They leave the Board with our best wishes. I also want to thank Evelyn, our Chair for the last 4 years, for being gracious and supportive to me as she's handed over the reins. I'm pleased she is continuing as an Adviser.

Seven of us are what I'll call the first post Covid cohort to join the Board, so it's a completely new start for us. The Trustees are determined to adapt the Federation to ensure its future whilst at the same time preserving our WI traditions and values. I'm extremely fortunate in having a talented and enthusiastic group of fellow Trustees, who are all up for the challenge.

I'm pathologically impatient and I need to keep reminding myself that we are all volunteers with other lives to live. We also have significant financial constraints, so the reality is that although we Trustees have lots of ambitions, our capacity to get things done is frustratingly limited. Thankfully, our WIs are a huge resource which has the potential to make a big difference to what the Board can deliver to our members. Haytor Vale WI volunteered to host our recent Working Together workshop, paying for the hall and providing refreshments. Thanks to their support we were able to hold a workshop which otherwise wouldn't have happened. The involvement and support of our WIs and members will be important as we look for new ways to sustain and grow our Federation.

We also send our best wishes for the future to the new WI in Okehampton. Several of us Advisers had the pleasure of going to their Formation Meeting, which was full of enthusiasm and commitment to our wonderful WI family.

Earlier in the year, two pairs of house martins made their nests in the eaves of my house. House martins are on the Red List, their numbers have gone down by 44% between 1995 and 2022, so I was pleased to see them. The first pair are now on their second brood and are a delight, though I'll have a large mess to clear up when they've gone! The second pair arrived later, their nest didn't seem to be as well made as the other and sure enough it collapsed. Clearing up the nest material and the tiny perished fledglings was upsetting, and I thought that would be the end of it. No, they came back, rebuilt the nest in a different way on the remains of the old one and are now raising another family. Like those house martins we won't get everything right, but we will, with your help, carry on until we do. Finally, a heartfelt thank you for all the good wishes and encouragement I have received. They have been humbling, daunting and inspiring.

**Lucy Brothwood**

Devon Federation Chair



**Devon Federation Announces New Board**

We are delighted to welcome our newly elected Devon Federation Board of Trustees:
**Chair**: Lucy Brothwood (*Parke WI).*
**Vice Chairs:** Jan Connolly (*Halberton WI)* and Jo-Ann Middleton (*Parkham WI)*
**Federation Treasurer:** Val Tribble (*Dawlish WI).*
**Board members:** Carol Bennett (*WI in the City/Preston and Chelston WI);*
Sherrie Green (*Atherington and Umberleigh WI*); Susie Hodges (*Sir Joshua Reynolds WI*); Liz Roberts (*Newton Abbot WI*).
Please feel free to contact the Board through our Federation Secretary Ali Taylor with any ideas you may have or offers of help.
email : fed.sec@devonwi.org.uk

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
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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS……..from WI Advisers

**(wiadvisers@devonwi.org.uk)**

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wiadvisers@devonwi.co.uk

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## Okehampton WI Celebrates a Joyous Opening

On Tuesday, 16th July, the town of Okehampton witnessed a vibrant and heartwarming event. The official opening of its new Women's Institute branch, held at The Ockment Centre, the launch brought together women from across the community to celebrate friendship, empowerment, and the beginning of a new chapter for Okehampton WI. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and anticipation as attendees gathered to mark the occasion. The event featured a warm welcome, refreshments, and a lively introduction, speeches, and a chance for members to share their hopes for the future of the group.

The newly formed committee was introduced to enthusiastic applause, each member bringing a wealth of experience, passion, and dedication to the role. The committee will be instrumental in shaping the direction of Okehampton WI with the support and ideas from all members, planning engaging activities, and fostering a supportive environment for all.

The opening of Okehampton WI reflects the enduring spirit of the Women's Institute movement—bringing women together to inspire, educate, and support one another. With a strong foundation and a committed leadership team, the future looks bright for this new branch. New members are warmly welcomed, and meetings will be held regularly at The Ockment Centre, 31 North St, Okehampton EX20 1AR on the 3rd Wednesday of each month you walk through the pergolas to the entrance of the hall where there will be a variety of speakers, workshops, and social events planned. Whether you're looking to learn something new, make friends, or get involved in the community, or all three! Okehampton WI, offers a space for all women to thrive. The next meeting is Wednesday 17th September 2025 at 7pm.

For more information or to join, please contact Debbie Jessop via enquiries@devonwi.org.uk*By Jo-Ann Middleton, WI Adviser with support from Lucy Brothwood, Maureen Hunter and Sherrie Green.*

*Below: Getting to know each other*



*Debbie Jessop, Secretary of the new WI with Adviser Jo-Ann Middleton*



### A Note About Annual Meetings

Traditionally when the subscription year ran from January to December, most Devon WIs held their Annual Meetings in April and May. With the subscription year now starting in April we have found this can cause problems for some WIs and we now recommend holding the Annual Meeting in or before March each year. This ensures that the full committee and officers for the year ahead are elected before subscriptions become due on 1 April.

This prevents the unfortunate scenario where members pay their subscription in April but later find at the Annual Meeting that it does not prove possible to elect a full committee with a President, Secretary and Treasurer. In that event, the WI would be unable to continue to function and would need to suspend. Regrettably no refunds for subscriptions already paid could be given. We realise many of you have your programmes planned for 2026 so therefore aim to make the change in 2027.

**If you would like to discuss this further with your Adviser please let her know or contact wiadvisers@devonwi.org.uk for further advice.**

# Committee Information and Roundup

## COMBINED ARTS COMMITTEE

We are preparing to hold our Carol Service at Exeter Cathedral on Wednesday 4th December. As always we would like a few more singers to join us on that day. There are 3 WI Member Choirs who take part every year, but we need more members to sing with them. Please let me know if you would like to sing with us and I will give you details of the nearest choir to you. We have a specially printed book each year. Tis will be available to order from the DFWI office. More information on the Flyer which is now with your Secretary. Don't forget our Coffee Art Workshop on 14th October. Contact your Secretary or see the website.



p.wyatt@devonwi.org.uk

## ENVIRONMENT, RESOLUTIONS and CAMPAIGNS COMMITTEE

Hello ladies – First a BIG thank you to all of you that came along to the **Devon Pocket Meadow Project** launches – there were around 75 of you representing 28 WIs, and there are also other WIs members that could not make the launch that have since signed up. We also did our very first Teams attendance for two ladies at the Barnstaple launch – and it went surprisingly well. Sowing is in September/October and the vision is to create a very important Pollinator Corridor across the entirety of Devon where we have WI members. Seeds are free at the moment, and depending on where you are will depend on where we get them from – we have three partners who will provide seeds for us- so no cost to you, except postage. We are looking for more WIs to sign up, and that can be one lady from your group, to get involved so that we can help in our small way this very important project for the declining numbers of Bees, Butterflies and other pollinators. Please contact Jackie.bufton@devon.wi.org.uk to register. The FIRS have registered and they will plant in September.

The annual **Great British Beach** Clean is taking place from Friday 19th to Sunday 28th September, and the Marine Conservation Society are asking Wis on the coast to consider engaging in one of the collective citizen science efforts, with hundreds of beach clean events taking place across the UK. More detail of a beach clean near you is on their website.

**Water Watch**: Results are in from the Spring Water Blitz which many of you took part in – the findings for Devon from the Spring Report – "In Devon, we analysed 171 data points. Of these data points, 54% showed unacceptable levels of nutrient pollution. This compares to 74% in England overall, meaning that Devon had better than average water quality." There is another Blitz in September.

jackie.bufton@devonwi.org.uk

## FOOD, CRAFT AND SKILLS SUBCOMMITTEE

- Come and hear about Jane Austen's South West Connection on Tuesday 28th October at Longdown Village Hall. Booking form is with your Secretary now or see the DFWI website.
- Watch out for our 2026 lunches!




janet.connolly@devonwi.org.uk

## SPORT and LEISURE COMMITTEE



**Exeter Canal and River Cruise**

On a hot Friday afternoon in June, 83 members and friends from all over the county gathered to go on a cruise down the River Exe to Exmouth. After an unavoidable hiccup, those who eventually embarked thoroughly enjoyed the trip. Stuart Line looked after us very well and the weather was perfect. It was an interesting, leisurely journey, past Topsham, Powderham, Starcross and Lympstone, finishing in Exmouth, which has various eating places as well as frequent buses and trains back to Exeter and beyond.

Croquet and Skittles are both already organised, and we welcome ideas for more events as well as volunteers to join us.

*NB: Please note that for ALL Federation events, the priority is for our members. However, when a public event is arranged, non-members are included, but at a slightly higher charge. The current booking and payment systems will be reviewed by the new Board of Trustees and changes may be made*.

Angela.white@devonwi.uk

## News from DFWI

The DFWI Annual meeting at the Corn Exchange in July was the venue for judging the FC&S Molly Nosworthy competition. The entries were a flower arrangement in a seashell. Well done to all entrants.



In First place was East Budleigh with Bicton WI, 2nd was Atherington & Umberleigh WI and in 3rd place Beer WI.










The winner of the CA Radio Devon Cup was announced. Her entry was an alternative version of Jerusalem. Congratulations to Hilary Woods of Christow WI. Her winning entry is below.

*Jerusalem 2025*

*And did we make a lot of jam*
*To feed our people in the war?*
*And was this motto in our hearts*
*When "Home and Country" was our core?*

*But now we fight for causes new,*
*For dental health and homes for all*
*And unafraid we take our stand,*
*With banners raised and standing tall.*

*Bring me my sisters and my friends,*
*Bring me my voice, both loud and clear,*
*Bring me the means to gain my ends,*
*Bring me my members far and near.*

*We will not cease from campaign fight,*
*Nor will our pens sleep in our hands,*
*'Til we have built a better world,*
*In our own and in other lands.*

There was no winner for the St George's Day Trophy this year as the judges felt the entries did not meet the brief.

**300+ Club**

Winning numbers and the WIs that those numbers are linked to are listed below.
These winners will receive £25. Thanks to all who have joined or renewed their membership. You can join at any time and there are now enough members for an extra draw later in the year.

| **June 2025** | **July 2025** |
|---|---|
| **Number 28** from Little Torrington WI | **Number 471** from Erme WI |
| **Number 454** from Newton Abbot WI | **Number 18** Honiton Evening WI |

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# CHRISTMAS MARKET 2025

This will be in Bristol on Wednesday 26 November. Details with your Secretary soon.

**Bere Ferrers WI** had a very busy May Bank Holiday weekend. On the Saturday their float came 3rd in the village carnival. Its theme was "Heroes and Heroines". However, taking a bit of a liberty they became "Mrs Pancake and her Suffering Jets". They co-opted a husband to join as the policeman.




On Bank Holiday Monday they ran a cake stall on a chilly and very windy recreation field. As always their table was laden with goodies, which were snapped up by the locals and they sold out shortly after lunch.





**Uplowman WI** hosted the Annual Flower & Produce Show on 21st June in Uplowman Village Hall. It was a super day with around 350 entries. The flower entries were stunning, as was the produce, cakes, crafts, photography and beverages, making the judging difficult. There were afternoon teas available after the judging and everyone really enjoyed the afternoon.

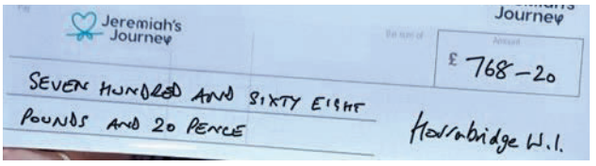






On June 18th **Sampford Spiney and Horrabridge WI** presented a cheque for £768.20 to the charity Jeremiah's Journey. The money was raised by draws and events over the past 12 months.






**Kenn and Kennford WI** have possibly had the busiest June ever.
They started by providing cream teas to help the local charity Devon in Sight celebrate their centenary. It was a lovely sunny day. A big thank you to helpers in the day.
Next, members had a sunny evening boat trip along the River Exe, enjoying Fizz and chips.
Their third outing was to support the National Garden Scheme at Bickham House, in Kenn.
A beautiful garden, good food and fun company. The owner Julia Tremlett made them very welcome. Oh, and the sun shone. They feel blessed.







On Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th June, **Clayhanger WI** provided wonderful refreshments at the annual Oakdene Open Garden and Plant Sale Weekend. Visitors helped raise over £500 for Clayhanger WI Hall funds. They were truly blessed with wall to wall sunshine. Below are four of their members who formed part of the team who kept visitors topped up with delicious cakes, biscuits, teas, coffees and squash over the weekend.
Also featured are pictures from Tony Keene, who provided a delightful exhibition of his work in the refreshment studio.
A further £734.75 was raised for the Clayhanger WI Hall fund from plants sales at Oakdene over the weekend. Due to such a successful weekend, they are now busy planning for the 2026 weekend.



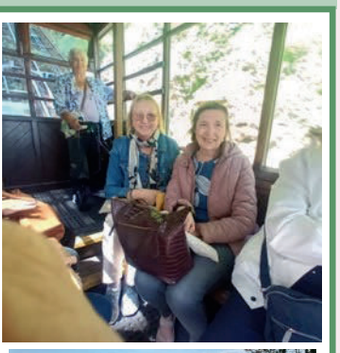
**Cornwood WI** enjoyed their July Craft Morning . One of their members demonstrated the art of vegetable and fruit carving.
Their walking group went to Jennycliff and Mountbatten in June,.
It was a wonderful sunny day for the walk overlooking Plymouth Sound. They also enjoyed a visit to the café at Jennycliff for refreshment afterwards.





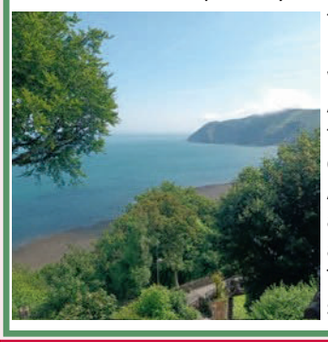
## More WI news



**Appledore WI** were delighted to find out they could use excess funds for an educational outing to benefit their members.

On 11th June paid up members were allowed to travel by coach to Lynton and Lynmouth cost free but any family or friends who went along were charged. They had a great day blessed with beautiful sunshine wedged in between two days of torrential rains, so they felt very fortunate indeed. They broke into groups and ventured into selected areas of historical interest. The funicular railway and its history was high on the agenda and they weren't disappointed. The views of the south Wales coast from Lynton were amazingly clear and the sea blue and gentle. They travelled down from there into Lynmouth on the funicular and gained a brief knowledge of how the train functioned using water from the West Lyn river. The railway was completed by 1890. They had a little fun time too playing in the stocks outside as well as looking at the wonderful shops. They then headed to the Lynmouth Flood Memorial Hall and saw Pathe news film footage of the flood disaster of August 15th 1952 and its speculated cause. 37 lives were lost and there is one unidentified young women laid to rest in the local cemetery.





After lunch they visited the Lyn Valley Arts and Crafts centre and were tempted by a wonderful array of homemade crafts of everything you could imagine - needless to say that money was spent.

Apart from the history of the area they admired the stunning scenery, all looking at its best in the sunshine. Everywhere was so green and lush. They had a wonderful day and some are planning a return visit at the end of the season to do some Christmas shopping.

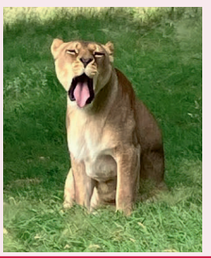
The members felt it was a privilege to use WI funds for the visit and all agreed it was money well spent.

In 15th July fifteen members of **Kingskerswell WI** visited Dartmoor Zoo for their summer outing. They were taken around by Izzy, one of the Education Department staff, who gave an insight into the day-to-day routines of the big cats. The zoo is set in a beautiful spot overlooking the Moors and has a lot of interesting and varied species. The members were given a free annual pass with their tickets and most said they would definitely go back.

A very enjoyable interesting day for all.

Thank you to Dartmoor Zoo.







**Exminster WI** have been out and about in July - we live in such a beautiful part of the country, it's great to be able to make the most of it.

On 18th July several members thoroughly enjoyed a guided walk on Dartmoor followed by a Cream Tea at the Moorland Hotel. Our guide was Paul Rendell - his Dartmoor knowledge was amazing - we all learned so much about life there in days gone by and the flora and fauna. A great afternoon's outing.

Later in the month we went to Dawlish for Fish and Chips followed by a Treasure Trail. The Trail lasted about 2 hours and took us to parts of Dawlish we may never have been to. Yet again the weather played its part - it was a lovely balmy evening.

Both events were thoroughly enjoyed by all those ladies who took part.



### Visits to Rosemoor RHS Garden

On 16th June 36 ladies from **Wellswood WI**, **Ilsham WI, Wellswood Afternoon WI** and **St Marychurch WI,** along with guests of members enjoyed a wonderful day out to Rosemoor, organised by Wellswood WI.

The gardens were a true delight, with the roses in full bloom and their fragrance filling the air –it was simply magical. The weather was wonderful too being warm and pleasant, with just a hint of cloud to keep things comfortable. It was a lovely day shared with friends, flowers, and fresh air – a perfect summer outing.



On Friday 27 June, members and guests of the **Shaldon and Ringmore WI** embarked on a thoroughly enjoyable day trip to the beautiful RHS Rosemoor gardens. Travelling comfortably by coach from Shaldon, everyone was in high spirits, eager to explore the horticultural delights on offer.

The weather was perfect for a garden visit, allowing attendees to fully immerse themselves in Rosemoor's diverse and stunning landscapes. From the meticulously curated rose gardens, in full bloom, to the serene woodlands and vibrant herbaceous borders, there was something to captivate every visitor. Members and guests enjoyed strolling through the various gardens, taking in the peaceful ambiance of this renowned RHS garden.

A highlight for many was undoubtedly the opportunity to socialise and share the experience with fellow WI members and friends.

The trip provided a wonderful chance for camaraderie and connection outside of the usual meeting setting.



| Dates for your Diary | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Activity** | **Date** | **Closing date (if relevant)** |
| | | |
| Kwerky Krafts Coffee Art workshop Teign Valley Hall (CA) | 14 October 2025 | 15 September 2025 |
| Jane Austen Afternoon Tea with speaker, Longdown | 28 October 2025 | 30 September 2025 |
| Christmas Shopping Trip Bristol | 26 November 2025 | TBC |
| Exeter Cathedral Carol Concert | 3 December 2025 | TBA |
| Skittles Winter Games from October 2025 (S&L) | Final: 18 April 2026 TBC | 1st August 2025 |

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 .

If the closing date has passed please make contact to see if there are any spaces left.

Please note that **we do not give refunds** for events booked, unless we have to cancel, as we may have to refuse other applications and can incur booking charges. If you book and cannot go please try to sell on your space to others in yours or neighbouring WIs.

Some events should be booked through your WI while others may be individual bookings, For instance holidays or overnight stays will be by individuals. Online bookings will usually be personal too although a group of members may book together.

## More WI news

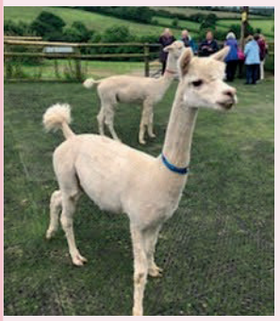
**North Tawton WI** have been busy in July. They recently had a group outing to White Stuff in Exeter. Let loose in the shop, their members enjoyed a couple of hours checking out the latest season's look. There was much hilarity when several members stepped out from the changing room wearing the same shirt. Talk about great minds thinking alike! Later in the month on a glorious day a coachload of members headed off for the day on their annual mystery trip. After stopping at Otter Nurseries near Honiton for coffee, they spent a wonderful day in Weymouth before enjoying a pub dinner on the way home. Two members Lorna Dawe and Annette Andrews managed to guess the destination correctly and were rewarded with a box of chocolates to eat on the way home. The members, some of whom hadn't been there in decades, said how much they had enjoyed the opportunity to revisit a place that held so many happy childhood memories, and judging from the smiling faces on the way home, many more happy memories were made on that day too.





Twenty members of **Lewtrenchard WI** enjoyed a delicious picnic in the garden of member Jean, and afterwards their annual outing to the Cinnamon Trust, where they enjoyed the company of alpacas, cats and dogs .

More information is available about the Trust on https://cinnamon.org.uk/



**Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo WI** hosted a successful Yealm Group meeting despite the fact that most of the committee had never been to one.
Their speaker was Caroline Hemmings from De Bora in Exeter talking about bras. The WI collected bags of old or unwanted bras from those attending which were given to Caroline for her charity which recycles them. Good bras are given to another charity for use by women who need them.
They had a quiz and a raffle too. Some of the raffle proceeds were given to the speaker in addition to her fee and the surplus of £57 was sent to Breast Cancer Research.
Despite the stress it went well.

**Tedburn St Mary WI** enjoyed an excellent presentation delivered by the speaker for the evening, Katie Cross, from the Exeter bakery business Cake or Death. Katie gave a fascinating and informative talk about her career and business. Katie founded Cake or Death which is based in Exeter and employs a team of local staff. E commerce accounts for most sales, with cakes being sent out in their hundreds each week via the mail, although you can visit too. Katie also sells her cakes at local events including Exeter Christmas market. WI members were fortunate enough to sample the vegan chocolate brownies and declared them to be absolutely delicious.

Katie was generous in providing raffle prizes too.




Karen Keast of **Bideford Quays WI,** who featured in the last issue of Devon WI News, completed the 630 mile walk along the South West Coast path. She has raised £4700 so far for Cancer Research but it is not too late to donate. Well done Karen!

https://www.justgiving.com/page/karen-keast-1

In her own words "I only went and bloomin completed the 630 mile 'stroll'! Thank you everyone for your support and generosity, I feel overwhelmed by people's kindness "

