theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

NEWS DEVON WI

JUNE 2026

Atherington and Umberleigh WI visits their local nursery, learning about flowers, shrubs, and how to plant up a 16 inch basket!



PETALS, POTS & PLENTY OF LAUGHS

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theWI INSPIRING WOMEN | Devon

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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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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRS




As we step into early summer, it's fair to say the weather has kept us all on our toes! One minute we were basking in glorious sunshine, the next reaching for jumpers again after a rather sharp 10-degree drop. That said, we're hoping summer has now decided to stay put!

Following our mid-May communication, we will be sharing further details in June about the progress of the sale of The Firs. Thank you, as always, for your patience while this important process continues.

Behind the scenes, there's been no shortage of activity. We have been busy sorting through files and bringing our systems into the digital age (at last!). Meanwhile, the great garage clear-out at The Firs continues – and we can confirm it has been both a challenge and an adventure! A very special thank you must go to Janet Connolly, who has worked tirelessly (and very cheerfully!) through it all.

Many of you will either be enjoying or have just enjoyed the Devon County Show. Do keep an eye out for our stand – the bras on display will make sure we're impossible to miss! We hope we've had the chance to catch up with lots of you over the three days, and we'll be sharing photos in the July edition.

Looking ahead, we are delighted to confirm our Members' Day will take place on Wednesday 23rd September 2026. Full details will follow soon via flyers and email in June, with a further update in the July newsletter – something lovely to look forward to.

As we approach the Annual Meeting, just a gentle nudge to ensure your paperwork is completed and returned to The Firs by 19th June 2026 – email is preferred (and much quicker!), though post is, of course, still welcome.

We will also soon be asking for support across the county to help promote this year's resolution. If you feel able to lend a hand or would simply like to know more, please do email **enquiries@devonwi.org.uk** – we would be delighted to hear from you.

Finally, the Board would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership, and for all the incredible work that happens behind the scenes. Devon WI continues to flourish because of you – your energy, enthusiasm and community spirit make all the difference (and we know a great deal of cake and cups of tea help too!).

With warmest wishes, *Jo-Ann & Jan*

ARE YOU IN THE 300+ CLUB ?

Why not join the 300+ Club and be in with a chance of winning £25 every month? For just £10 per year, your number will be entered into a monthly draw, with two prizes of £25 up for grabs every month. Plus, there's an extra bonus draw in time for Christmas, adding a little festive cheer!

The 300+ Club runs from June, so now is the perfect time to get involved and secure your number. For more details or to sign up, please contact me or your secretary.

Good luck! **300plusclubcoordinator@devonwi.org.uk**

DFWI BACS details are below. **Please remember to email the person you are paying and copy in Sarah Ford our DFWI bookkeeper.**
bookkeeper@devonwi.org.uk
Devon Federation of Womens Institutes DFWI **Sort code 08-92-99** **Account no 67185081**

DEVON FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES ANNUAL MEETING

ONLINE DELEGATE TICKETS

WED 1ST JULY 2026

ONLINE VIA ZOOM 10.30AM START

TICKET REGISTRATION LINK

To follow shortly.

Please note that voting attendees (WI Link Delegates), will each require a Wi-Fi enabled device i.e. a smart phone, iPad or laptop in order to place votes during the meeting.

WORKING TOGETHER PROGRAMME PLANNING AT ASHBURTON WI

Thank you to all those who attended the pilot programme planning session held in Ashburton in April. This initiative was intended to be a fact-finding mission to explore what resources you would find most useful to assist with preparing your monthly programme of speakers. We also explored contingency plans for when a speaker lets you down at the last moment, and you came up with plenty of suggestions for alternative activities. We hope those of you who attended found the session worthwhile. We found your input invaluable and really appreciated your ideas, your commitment and your feedback. A special thank you to Ashburton WI for kindly hosting the event, and for providing the tea and biscuits.

Thank you, too, to those WIs that were unable to attend the session but nevertheless completed the pre-session questionnaire. It is not too late to submit your responses. We will then summarise all the information we have gathered and go back to the Board of Trustees with our recommendations for the next steps. We hope to have more news for you by June. We have set up a dedicated email address - **programmeplanning@devonwi.org.uk** – which is monitored currently by Maureen Hunter, WI Adviser and a member of Teignmouth Gems, and Jackie Wheatley of Dawlish WI. Do please feel free to contact us. We'd love to receive copies of your current programmes and hear more of your ideas, as well as any recommendations you may have for suitable speakers.

FEDERATION COMPLAINT LEAD

We are looking for a Federation Complaint Lead. This person must be able to operate impartially, overseeing and managing queries alongside the Federation Board of Trustees. The FCL is the main point of contact for complaints within the federation and must have:

A WI membership, good communication skills, standards of impartiality, empathy, good listening skills, attention to detail, organisational skills, time management skills, and understand the importance of confidentiality.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please contact **federation.secretary@devonwi.org.uk** for more information about this role.





WI ANNUAL MEETINGS 2026

Are now coming to an end and the Adviser Team have enjoyed visiting many of you.



2027

All Devon WIs are expected to move Annual Meeting to **March.**

Thank you to those that have already done so

What to do next....

- Annual report form
- Financial statement
- Secretary/ Committee report
- Programme

All need to be sent to The Firs by email or post by the 19th of June please.

The Adviser Team are always happy to answer any questions at Working Together workshops or by email wiadvisers@devonwi.org.uk or individual adviser emails

TREASURERS HELP

Please can you speak to your advisor if you are struggling to find a treasurer. We have had a treasurer volunteer to take on another WI's treasurer role (subject to location), to ensure no closures will resolt from a lack of treasurer.

AN UPDATE FROM TEDBURN ST MARY WI



Members of Tedburn St Mary WI are having a busy and enjoyable year. A local group, now numbering over forty in total, have had plenty on offer to them via their WI in April 2026. Tedburn St Mary WI aim to have a lunch out every month, providing members with the opportunity to relax and socialise, but also to give support to local businesses. This month the lunch outing is to be held at Holmleigh Garden Centre, which the group have visited before and really enjoyed. Now that the weather is improving participation in the monthly Tedburn St Mary WI walk is possible. This April we went to Steps Bridge. The walk was a great success with 7 members, (plus a four-legged friend) walking in the beautiful Spring sunshine and admiring the daffodils.

Members also had a lot of fun when they joined the Bollywood dancing event hosted by the Alphington WI. Many thanks to the Alphington group for inviting us to this sociable event. The speaker at the April meeting was Caryl Gibson, a qualified Cordon Bleu cook. Caryl delivered an entertaining and informative presentation in which she demonstrated how to cook a chicken dish. Members took away with them lots of useful cooking tips, a copy of the recipe in order to make the dish at home and were able to sample the food, which was delicious. Thank you Caryl!



Some Tedburn St Mary WI members sampling the dish made by Caryl Gibson, following her Cordon Bleu cooking presentation at the April meeting.



President Jane, presenting Tedburn St Mary WI member Sheila with a 90th birthday bouquet. Congratulations!

The 90th birthday of a Tedburn St Mary WI member was celebrated with a presentation of flowers.

Tedburn St Mary WI crafting sessions are always well supported, and continue to offer a variety of art and craft activities and projects for members to engage in. We also hope to start up a Book Club in the near future. Our regular meetings are held in Tedburn St Mary Village Hall on the first Tuesday of each month, at 7.30pm. As always, we love to meet prospective new members, and you will be warmly welcomed if you would like to attend. There are lots of activities on offer at Tedburn St Mary WI every month, including good speakers, walks, and knitting and craft sessions. Remember that the first meeting attended is free, to enable you to decide whether to join our WI. Just contact either Jane or Rachel.

President Jane: Tel: **07814659526**
Secretary Rachel: Tel: **01647 61868**





ST. JOHN'S CHOIR

Colebrooke WI hosted the Red Earth Group Meeting for the 7 WIs in the Group on 27th April 2026 at Colebrooke Parish Hall.

Our speaker for the evening was Hedli Niklaus, who played Kathy Perks on 'The Archers' which is broadcast on Radio 4. As well as Kathy Perks she played two other characters, Libby Jones who was a milk recorder, and Eva Lenz who was a German au Pair at Home Farm. She also ran the 'Archers Addicts' fan club from 1990 for 23 years.

This was followed by supper comprising sandwiches, sausage rolls, cake and crisps with tea or coffee.

The competition for a scarecrow based on an agricultural theme was won by Colebrooke WI, with Bow WI in second place.

It was an enjoyable and entertaining evening.

ARTS & HISTORY FOR NORTH TAWTON WI

North Tawton members have been busy again in April as we have been out and about on visits and learning new skills. Early in the month a small group of members spent the afternoon with hammer and chisel in hand as they learned how to carve wood. By the end of the afternoon all agreed that it was a fun afternoon and even better – they all came home unscathed! And as if we hadn't had enough of playing with dangerous tools, we also had a craft afternoon where members learned how to lino cut. A lot of concentration was required but everyone was able to produce something beautiful.







Then in the middle of April, several of our members had a very informative afternoon visiting Andrew Sinclair's Sculpture School near Winkleigh. Andrew is a world famous figurative sculptor and our members learned a little about the time consuming process of producing a large commemorative sculpture. And, to round off the afternoon, we enjoyed a cream tea which when the jam is on top, we in Devon all know is a work of art in itself!

Then later in April another group of our members spent a wonderful afternoon learning about the history of one of Exeter's oldest buildings, The Devon and Exeter Institution situated in Cathedral Square. Who knew that this is in fact one of a few private membership lending libraries in the country, dating back to the early part of the 19th century and that it is home to books dating back to medieval times? And then (I think there is a theme here) the afternoon was rounded off with a superb cup of tea and selection of freshly baked cakes.

DEVON WI SKITTLES FINAL







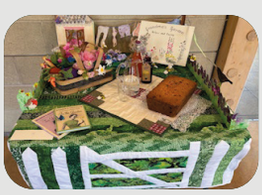
On Saturday 18th April the Devon Federation of WI's Skittles Final took place at Longdown Community Hall between Ilsham WI and Halwill WI. Both teams arrived promptly and ready to play at 2pm.

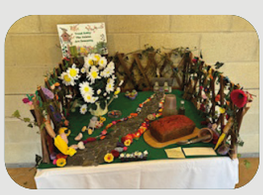
We had an exciting start to the match when I opened the skittle alley and the alarm went off. Luckily I had the number for the caretaker of the Community Hall and following her instructions I was able to stop the alarm so the match could begin.

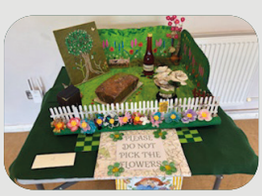
Despite the arctic conditions of the skittle alley the teams played their six rubs valiantly and with good sportswomanship. Sadly, there can only be one victorious team and this year it was Ilsham who were the champions. Halwill were worthy opponents though and put up a good fight. The final score was Ilsham 220 points and Halwill 197 points.

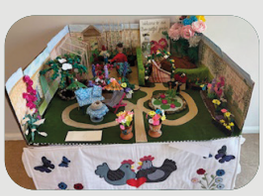
We were then treated to a delicious afternoon tea provided by Tedburn St Mary WI. Jane, Rachel and Maddy served everyone with plenty of tea, coffee, sandwiches and a variety of cakes. This was a great way to end an enjoyable afternoon.

Thank you to both skittles teams and Tedburn St Mary for making this occasion so much fun. I am already looking forward to next year's final.









WOOLSERY WEST COMPETITION

The theme was an English Country Garden, 88 members attended. Speaker was Josh from Birches Farm, he follows a Japanese principle of gardening. Entertainment was a sing along with two members playing guitar. Lunch was baked spuds, salad, trifle, and crumble, nothing came back on the plates so all good. This was our final time as we are closing May with just 12 members, time to join bigger groups.

CELBRATING 90 YEARS

Members of Sampford Spiney and Horrabridge W.I celebrated 90 years of their local W.I with afternoon tea at the Burrator Inn. Featured in the front of the photo are ex president Pat Kerslake and ex secretary Sybil Heathcock who will both also be 90 later this year.







FLOWERS AT ATHERINGTON & UMBERLEIGH WI

Atherington and Umberleigh W.I. had a very interesting meeting in our local nursery among the wonderful bedding, flowers and shrubs on display. The owner Jenny showed us how to plant up a 16 inch basket and how her huge pot filler machine worked as she runs the nursery alone or with very little help. She supplied us with delicious homemade cakes with tea and said she was too busy to join our W.I.!!

BARNSTAPLE BLOOMERS WI

At the beginning of our meetings for 2025-26 we voted to decide which local charity was most deserving of our support, to raise funds for. The majority vote was for a small local charity called Southwest Blood Bikes. They are an incredible charity, transporting blood, blood products and breast milk throughout Devon, to and from hospitals and hospices where it is vitally needed. All the members of the charity are volunteers, so any donations are used to maintain, repair and if necessary, replace the bikes used for this vital work.

We ran a charity table at each of our monthly meetings selling books, magazines, plants, unwanted gifts, Christmas decorations and our member's homemade produce: this raised a sum of £376. This amount paid for two new bike tyres and petrol to keep them on the road.

One of the volunteers, Paul, (and bike!) came to our March meeting where we presented a cheque to him. He gave us a very interesting talk about the work they do which was much enjoyed by all. Some of us also had photos taken astride the bike! We have decided to support Southwest Blood Bikes again this year to help them continue their important contribution to this vital work.

Thank you to all our members for such a great year.





DAWLISH WI AT DARTINGTON GLASS

Dawlish WI took a trip to Dartington Glass in April, obviously we stopped for a coffee and cake on the way which was very nice. We were able to see some very skilled people, it was like a well orchestrated ballet with them all moving around with extremely hot glass! A little bit of shopping before the coach back to Dawlish, a good day had by all.









HOUSE TOURS, GARDENS & CREAM TEAS AT FURSDON

FURSDON, CADBURY, DEVON, EX5 5JS
01392 860860 | admin@fursdon.co.uk
Fursdon is the perfect location for your WI group day out! Explore the beautiful gardens, take a fascinating house tour and then relax with delicious home baking at our tearoom. Bespoke opening for larger groups (20+ people) and smaller groups welcome on public open days.
www.fursdon.co.uk

fursdon
DEVON

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF BUCKFASTLEIGH WI





A Virtual Walk With Words & Music

Appledore based Shanty duo 'The Cabin Girls' are available to present their virtual walk. Celia is an Amazon bestselling poet, whose book 'The Shout', is a fundraiser for the RNLI. Sharon is a folk and jazz singer.
With pictures, poems and songs of the sea, let us transport you around our coastline and tell you of life in North Devon, past and present.
Contact Sharon: 07775 930157
sharon@discoveryourbounce.com
www.facebook.com/cabingirlsdevon









100 YEARS OF LEE WI

Lee WI celebrated their 100th birthday with a lunch in the Memorial hall on 14th April 2026. Guests included the North Devon adviser and members of local WIs.

MURDER & MYSTERY AT BRADSTONE MANOR FARM

Members of Lewtrenchard WI enjoying a murder mystery at the local Tamar Group meeting hosted by Kelly WI and held at Bradstone Manor Farm.





WELLSWOOD WI'S PROLIFIC KNITTERS

Our prolific knitters Maureen Freer & Penny Collins have been at it again. The Wellswood post box topper for May 2026 - you guessed it Maypole.





MARCH MANOR MADNESS!

21 members arrived at the Manor Resort Okehampton on March 16th for 3 days of crafting and sports activities. The ***only*** sports they did not appear to provide were snow and water skiing! This is the second year the Devon WI has visited this resort and a good time was had by everyone, with very appetising catering for most diets and a reasonably priced bar, always a plus!! Members were able to talk to other WI's resulting in many other wide-ranging and interesting discussions. Many people made the most of their stay by starting crafts early on Monday morning and continuing on during Wednesday afternoon after we booked out.

Currently the resort is undergoing a refurbishment so perhaps we will wait a couple of years before venturing back. They informed me that they will be offering rooms that have extra facilities as well as those with hot tubs. A room with both would be ideal is my view.

Thank you ladies for an enjoyable time it was great to meet you all.





‘ART ON YOUR DOORSTEP’ WALK

Seven members, along with one guest from Wellswood WI, Torquay, recently enjoyed a gentle and enjoyable stroll along the exhibition route, starting from Torquay Railway Station to Torre Abbey, and continuing on to the Strand. The outing was organised by Jean Pizey for the Wellswood Ramblers group and took in Art on Your Doorstep: Masterpieces, hosted in partnership with the National Gallery.

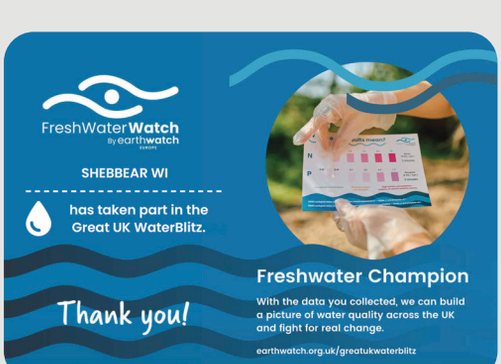
We were especially fortunate to have Suzanne Belina with us, whose knowledge of art brought each masterpiece to life through her engaging and informative commentary.

This inspiring national touring project brings life-sized reproductions of famous artworks into local communities. Running from 6 March to 5 September 2026, the free open-air exhibition stretches along the seafront from Torre Abbey to Torquay Harbour, offering a wonderful blend of art, fresh air, and stunning coastal views.

And, of course, no WI outing would be complete without ending on a sociable note—over coffee and cake!







SHEBBEAR WI’S GREAT UK WATERBLITZ

Shebbear WI have been taking part in the Great UK Water Blitz monitoring our rivers, this article explains what it is and hopefully encourage more WIs to take part. Copy of certificate and Sue and Jill who have been doing it.

> **Thank you for taking part in the Great UK WaterBlitz.**
>
> We are so grateful for your dedication and support of our vital citizen science campaign. Since 2024, nearly 20,000 people like you have taken part in the Great UK WaterBlitz. The data you gathered provides valuable insights and has created the most comprehensive snapshot of the health of the UK’s freshwater ecosystems.
>
> We hope you feel as proud as we are of the difference you’ve made. By getting involved, you have become a part of the change, joining a movement of dedicated citizen scientists who are championing the health of our rivers, streams, lakes and ponds.
>
> Thank you again,
> **Dr Laura Bannatyne**
> **Earthwatch Europe**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

EVENT/COMPETITION	DATE	BOOKING DETAILS
Treasurer Training	The Firs Thursday 11 June 10:00am - 3:00pm	Through TicketSource: Flyers with your Secretaries (12 spaces, £6 per person)
Working Together: Presidents and Secretaries	The Firs Friday 12 June 10:00am - 3:00pm	Through TicketSource: Flyers with your Secretaries (12 spaces, £6 per person)
Working Together Workshop	Sunningmead Community Centre Tiverton Monday 22nd June 10:00am - 1.30pm	Look out for the flyer coming out to your Secretaries
Devon Federation Online Meeting	Wednesday 1 July 2026	See page 2
Health Day Awareness	Wednesday 15 July 2026 10:00am - 3:00pm	See flyer for more details, you can speak to the office, or email **Jackie.bufton@devonwi.org.uk**
Croquet Days at Raleigh Meadows	Barnstaple EX31 4JF Thursday 6th August 2026 10:00am-4:00pm & Friday 14th August 2026 10:00am-4:00pm	See Flyers
Devon Federation Annual Event Members Day	Wednesday 23 September 2026	Riviera International Centre, Chestnut Avenue, Torquay, Devon TQ2 5LZ. Look out for Flyers and communications coming through.
Devon Federation Holiday to the Lake District	Thursday 15th - Monday 19th October 2026	Booking forms and flyers with your Secretaries **janet.connolly@devonwi.org.uk** **Selling fast** – Hurry, all single rooms booked
Carol Service Exeter	Wednesday 2 December 2026 - Time TBC	Exeter Cathedral
Devon Chairs Rosebowl	Closing date: Friday July 31st & Presentation Date: Wednesday September 23rd	See Flyer
Next Board Meeting	9 June 2026	The Firs

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 office. 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.

300+ CLUB
JUNE – £25 EACH

Have you joined yet?
See **page 1** for more info.

YOUR IT DOCTOR – HERE TO HELP

Personal, patient, and jargon-free support for everything from email problems to setting up on new devices. **it.support@devonwi.org.uk**

Canva - did you know that as part of your WI membership you can use Canva? Contact **it.support@devonwi.org.uk** to get registered.