

Around & About Your WIs!

Avon Federation of Women's Institutes

Issue: Summer 2025

Let's Dance!

In March, WIs got involved in the Let's Dance! National Campaign – a UK initiative by Angela Rippon CBE to promote health and joy through dance.

Keynsham WI

Members enjoyed a dance class as part of the first National Dance Day.



Hanham WI

Following Angela's encouragement to dance, some members took part in a 'Moving for Fun' class, arranged by President, Pam Hunt. Certainly, a fun morning was enjoyed by all!



Westbury-on-Trym WI

More recently, a demonstration of Indian dancing, after which members enjoyed taking part.



Bishop Sutton & Stowey WI

Meanwhile, Bishop Sutton & Stowey WI hosted a free dance event with demonstrations by local groups including the Avon Dance Academy & Chew Valley Dancing School, Somerset Morris and Svetlana from the OvDa Ovsyannikova Dance Company. Attendees of all ages were also treated to tea and cakes!



Out & About



Westleaze Long Ashton WI

In January this year, members had an inspiring talk by Ian Caskie about the SS Great Britain. Ian is a guide at the ship and spends a lot of his time travelling around the country giving talks.

They followed up with a visit in May, when Ian, once again, was their guide. He literally brought the ship to life and members could imagine themselves crossing the Atlantic in those cramped conditions.

Sandford WI

Members enjoyed a great social meeting of afternoon tea in the Victorian styled Tiffany's Restaurant at the end of the historical Grand Pier in Weston-super-Mare. It was a lovely occasion to catch-up with old friends and meet new ones. The surrounding views looking back towards the town were amazing!



Nineteen members also joined together for a special social outing to Wincanton Races. It was an occasion to dress up in style and enjoy a delicious three course dinner in the hospitality suite before watching the seven races that afternoon with a lot of cheering and excited shouting for the winners from the terrace!

Portbury WI

Ten members went on a day trip to the American Museum in Bath. The house and gardens are well worth a visit, and they were very lucky with the weather.



Knowle WI

Members enjoyed a 'street party' to celebrate VE Day. Although, one member remembers dancing on College Green, Joan who is 101 years of age had a quieter time serving in the RAF in Stornoway.



Shortwood Village WI

With their monthly meeting falling on VE day, after holding a discussion and voting on the NFWI resolution; dressed in red, white and blue members played a game of 'pinning the cigar on Winston Churchill' and singing popular songs from the 1940's accompanied by their President, Caroline, on the piano.

Charities & Fund Raising

Hanam WI

The 'big knit' is Age UK's partnership with Innocent Drinks. Members and friends knitted 277 of these little 'hats' for the tops of smoothie bottles. Every hat knitted raises 30p to help Age UK provide much needed services and support to older people. The hats were passed on to the charity by a local wool shop which is supporting the cause by donating wool.



Some members have also knitted these lovely blankets to be sent to the charity 'Knit for Peace UK', an initiative of the Charities Advisory Trust, which grew from projects they developed in Rwanda and India bringing women together from traditionally hostile communities.

If you are unable to donate your knitting locally, you can send your items to them and they will distribute them to people in need across the UK, including community groups, prisons, hospitals, care homes and other organisations which support people who need warm clothes and blankets.

They also welcome yarn and needles as knitting is found to be therapeutic and fun, bringing people together, improving physical and mental health.



Bystanders Can be Lifesavers

Harbourside WI

Members showing their support by making a heart shape with their hands, just like the campaign logo.



Half a Matinee Dress or All's well that ends well...

'Yippie! It's working' chuckled I with much glee. Yes, I learned how to 'tether' today, the day of the NFWI Annual Meeting 2025.

Cast on 111 stitches

Last evening, I was informed that the Wi-Fi Hub at the Village Hall was not working! But... a new hub would arrive between 8.38am and 11:38am. Cutting it close!

Knitting needles fell to floor, 10 stitches dropped!

There were other options (thank you to the Chair of the Village Hall and my WI mates). One being tethering. Thank you, Google, for your information and easy steps to be successful. So, my unlimited data mobile phone was going to act as the Wi-Fi.

Cast on 20 stitches

Mobile phone, laptop and the Hewish Village Hall system connected, we were now ready to rock and roll. 11:30am success! The watch party was go, go, go!

Our visitors were not going to be disappointed. If all else failed, we had tea, cake and sandwiches. Yummy, yum, yum!

Knit row plain, Knit row purl, Repeat

11.45am promptly, proceedings began. Jeryl Stone, you were the epitome of calm. Through your undaunted leadership you navigated us through many tricky tech situations! It reminded me of Jeremy Vine's BBC Radio 2 programme. This was the first time, next year, all will be ironed out and it will flow like a 'Gok Wan' skirt.



Knit row plain, Knit row purl



I missed the huge mass of women I had never encountered before on such a large scale...

Knit row plain, Knit row purl

I missed the vibrancy, the quaking, the rumbling and the glory of the organ live...

Cast off 20, Sleeve begins

But I did learn so much...

The 15 minute BHF presentation was very emotive. Reminding us that bystanders can save lives!

Plain row, purl row, plain row purl row

The speakers were a delight. Emma and Angela were exceptionally inspiring and motivational.

Cast on 20, Wool over, wool under

From our Watch Party, teamwork for the day was incredible.

Just keep knitting!

That's the WI for me: working together for fairness and justice. To be the voice of the 'not always heard'. Will we host it next year? You bet! We'd love more attendees though. Cushions are a must. Cake, teas, and sarnies provided!

Our visitor from Congresbury WI, did not take her eyes from the virtual presentation but, somehow, she managed to knit half a baby's matinee jacket. Neck, sleeves and down to the abdomen. All in the time of the NFWI AM. Amazing!



The new Wi-Fi hub arrived at 3.00pm. All's well that ends well...

Wendy Akers, Hewish and District WI

Crafts and Workshops

Bishop Sutton and Stowey WI

A theme for Valentines Day and a new craft session for the 'Craft and Chat' members, 'dotting' paint with special tools on wooden hearts.



... and candles wrapped in napkin patterns!



Their latest craft sessions 'Fabric Necklaces'...



Sandford WI

Eleven members attended Wolfridge Alpaca Barn, Alveston, for a needle felt craft workshop. Using Alpaca wool from the herd raised there, they each made a seated Alpaca. The session was very enjoyable and informative, and suitable for all abilities. They also enjoyed lunch together at the cafe and then visited the Alpacas in their paddock for a closer look.



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Editorial Copy:

Articles for Around & About Your WIs! must be emailed to the Federation Secretary. AFWI reserves the right to edit copy for clarity or length, where necessary.



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Dates For Your Diary

DAY VISIT TO BLETCHLEY PARK

Wednesday 10 September 2025

Members: £58.00 Non-Members: £60.00

Closing Date: Wednesday 23 July 2025

COMMUNITY CHOIR SINGING WORKSHOP

Wednesday 17 September 2025, from 1.00pm to 4.00pm, at Wick Village Hall, Manor Road, Wick, BS30 5QJ

Members: £14.00 Non-Members: £16.00

Closing Date: Wednesday 23 July 2025

2025 AFWI ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday 23 September 2025, from 10.15am to 3.30pm, at BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RF (for Sat Nav)

Members Only: £21 (One free delegate per WI)

Closing Date: Thursday 7 August 2025

HISTORY TALK: THE NEWPORT MEDIEVAL SHIP

Thursday 23 October 2025, from 2.00pm to 3.30pm, at St Edyth's Church, Avonleaze, Sea Mills, Bristol BS9 2HU

Members: £12.00 Non-Members: £14.00

Closing Date: Tuesday 16 September 2025

PUBLIC AFFAIRS DAY

Thursday 13 November 2025, 10.15am for a 10.30am start to 3.30pm, at Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, 57-59 Broad Street, Chipping Sodbury BA37 6AD

HISTORY & HERITAGE OF BRISTOL

Tuesday 18 November 2025, from 11.00am to 3.30pm, Tours of The Wills Memorial Building Tower and Bristol Cathedral

THE STITCHING 4 ALL & CRAFT4CRAFTERS SHOW - BATH & WEST SHOWGROUND

Thursday 27 to Saturday 29 November 2025
AFWI is hoping to have a WI Stand with members demonstrating some Christmas themed crafts. If you are interested in getting involved, then please contact: suemurphy@avonfwi.org.uk

WIRE WORK WORKSHOP

Tuesday 2 December 2025, from 10.00am to 12.00 noon, at The Conygre Hall, Timsbury, BA2 0JQ

AFWI CAROL SERVICE

Tuesday 16 December 2025, from 2.00pm to 3.00pm, at St Mary's Thornbury, Castle Street, Thornbury, Bristol BS35 1HQ