

## AFWI History Talks October 2025

### THE NEWPORT MEDIEVAL SHIP

**Thursday 23 October 2025**  
**From 2.00pm to 3.30pm**

**St Edyth's Church Hall, Avonleaze, Sea Mills, Bristol BS9 2HU**

Dr Toby Jones, curator of the Newport Medieval Ship Project, opens this year's History Talks with, 'The Newport Medieval Ship: The Fascinating Journey from Discovery to Future', an insight into the work that has taken place since the shipwreck was discovered and raised between 2002 and 2003, and how our understanding of this 15th century merchant vessel has progressed through cleaning, digital documentation, analysis, and conservation.



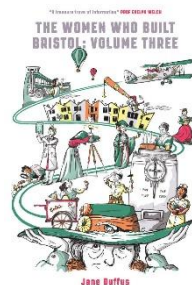
Tea and Coffee will be provided at this event.

**Members:** £12.00  
**Non-Members:** £14.00  
**Closing Date:** Tuesday 16 September 2025

### THE WOMEN WHO BUILT BRISTOL – VOLUME THREE

**Wednesday 29 October 2025**  
**From 2.00pm to 3.30pm**  
**Cleeve Village Hall, Main Road, Cleeve, Bristol, BS49 4PF (A370)**

By popular demand, Jane Duffus returns to AFWI's History Talks to update us on her latest research and new book on The Women who built Bristol - Volume Three.



Jane has worked in journalism/publishing for more than 25 years, on bestselling news stand magazines and as the author of six books about social history.

Tea and Coffee will be provided at this event.

**Members:** £12.00  
**Non-Members:** £14.00  
**Closing Date:** Monday 22 September 2025

## Public Affairs Day November 2025

**Thursday 13 November 2025**  
**10.15am (for a 10.30am start) to 3.30pm**

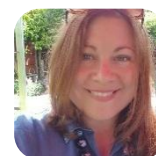
**Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, 57-59 Broad Street, Chipping Sodbury, BA37 6AD**

The WI campaigns on a huge range of issues – from promoting women's rights and fostering health awareness to encouraging sustainable development and building a fairer society.



This year, AFWI is pleased to present a Public Affairs Day, an opportunity to learn more about some of those issues.

In the morning we will hear from speakers on the subjects of 'By Standers Can Be Lifesavers' and 'Thinking Differently: Understanding Autistic and ADHD in Women and Girls'.



In the afternoon, Hayley Scott, a Forensic Scientist with the Metropolitan Police will be sharing some of her experiences with us.

Coffee can be purchased on arrival. There will be a raffle and Avon Country Markets will have goods for sale.

**Members:** £17.00  
**Non-Members:** £19.00  
**Closing Date:** Monday 6 October 2025

## AFWI Contacts

### WI House

11 Station Road, Keynsham BS31 2BH  
0117 9864782

### General Enquiries:

[office@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:office@avonfwi.org.uk)

### Events:

[events@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:events@avonfwi.org.uk)

### Office Hours:

10.00am to 2.00pm Tuesday to Thursday  
Please contact the office before visiting to arrange a suitable time.

### Federation Secretary:

Debbie Storey

[federationsecretary@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:federationsecretary@avonfwi.org.uk)

### Finance Officer:

Sarah Birch

[finance@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:finance@avonfwi.org.uk)

### MCS Officer/Administrator:

Belinda Hudson

[membership@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:membership@avonfwi.org.uk)

### Joint Chairs:

Lorna Tarr

[lornatarr@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:lornatarr@avonfwi.org.uk)

Judith Massey

[judithmassey@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:judithmassey@avonfwi.org.uk)

### Vice Chair:

Sue Murphy

[suemurphy@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:suemurphy@avonfwi.org.uk)

### Federation Treasurer

Marion Hulance

### Federation Safeguarding Officer

Josie Pownall

[josiepownall@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:josiepownall@avonfwi.org.uk)

### Editorial Copy:

Articles for Avon News must be emailed to the Federation Secretary. AFWI reserves the right to edit copy for clarity or length, where necessary.



To enter the **AFWI Lottery**,  
[click here.](#)



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## Chairs' Chatter

In this issue, I would like to share my recent experience attending the Act Now, Change Forever Mass Lobby, held on 9 July in Westminster, where WI members joined over 5,000 people from across the UK to call for a healthier, fairer, and safer future. It was a very productive and engaging event, despite the heat of over 30 degrees, which was ironic really considering the driving force was Climate Change.



The WI had a great stand, as you can see from the photo above, with the Chair of NFWI's Public Affairs Committee, Erika Brichta. The idea was to meet with your own MP to speak up for what matters most: our communities, climate, nature, and future. I had the opportunity to meet my local MP and discuss the WI's 'Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife' campaign, encouraging members to make and support applications to create bathing waters in rivers across England and Wales, a fantastic initiative to drive the cleanup of our precious waters.

One of the most interesting and insightful parts of the day was meeting and talking with people from other organisations, including Greenpeace and The Soil Association, collectively impressed by the WI's interest and involvement in such important environmental issues.

The Mass Lobby was just the beginning to find out 'What's Next', visit:

<https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/act-now-change-forever>

Or, to find out more about the WI Climate Ambassadors Scheme, visit:

<https://www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns/key-and-current-campaigns/climate-change/the-wi-climate-ambassador-scheme>

**Lorna Tarr**  
**AFWI Joint Chair**  
**and AFWI Climate Ambassador**

## AFWI 200 Club

Congratulations to the winners of the July and August 2025 £20 draws, Jean O'Connor (**Redhill WI**) and Hazel Nelson (**Rodway Rubies WI**).



## Anniversaries: September 2025

**Keynsham WI** celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this month. Congratulations from the Board of Trustees and staff at WI House.



## Membership Matters

### WI Annual Meetings

As Annual Meeting time rolls around again in October and November, to borrow a phrase for the Girl Guides, **Be Prepared!**

Help the IFEs (**Independent Financial Examiners**) by contacting them if your accounts are a bit delayed - IFEs are trained and here to help - don't leave it all to the treasurer – the committee as a whole is responsible for the WI's well-being and must therefore act with reasonable care and skill in managing the WI's resources responsibly and in the WI's best interests.



Secretaries, please return the **WI Contact Details** form as soon as possible following the meeting to ensure the office has the up-to-date details for meeting venues, WI officers, etc. We appreciate you may not be able to complete the form until your first committee meeting following the Annual Meeting, but the form must be completed and returned even if you have no changes in your committee, thank you.

For further guidance preparing for your Annual Meeting and committee elections, visit:

<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/guide-to-running-meetings/wi-annual-meetings>

If you would like an adviser to come to your Annual Meeting, please get in touch soon. We are a very small team, and it may be difficult to fit you all in!

### WI Waiting Lists

Membership growth, high demand, limited capacity, specific interests and friends' recommendations are all reasons why women may be waiting to join/visit a specific WI. A few weeks or months may be acceptable, however, too long and WIs are at risk of women losing interest, encouraging a poor reputation of the WI in general. Meanwhile, nearby WIs may be struggling due to lack of members.

If your WI has a waiting list, do you keep in contact, inviting potential members to a social coffee locally now and then? Why not encourage them to join another WI where they could enjoy the community and benefits of WI membership, for a short while, or let them know about our new virtual WI!

Please let your WI Adviser know, so we can recommend an alternative where they could be enjoying a great time somewhere else, albeit for a year! It is a proven fact that the more WIs there are in a neighbouring area the more members are attracted to join the WI. We can open another WI on a different day/time etc to spread membership which is in everyone's interests. We want to make sure everyone feels included, engaged and join a WI.

### Members resources - make the most from your membership!

**My WI** - a must for each committee/team member but lots of WI information for all members to keep yourself up to date with all things WI: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/>

**The WI Learning Hub** is a friendly, inclusive space designed to support you at every step, whether you're looking to try something new, grow a skill, or simply enjoy learning at your own pace. With a wide range of engaging, flexible courses, there's something here for everyone. WI members can enjoy most of our courses free of charge:

So, take a look around, find what inspires you, or let the Membership Support Team know if you would like us to arrange to look at the WI Learning Hub and My WI together to see how it all works for your committee and/or members.

<b>Judith Massey</b>	<a href="mailto:judithmassey@avonfwi.org.uk">judithmassey@avonfwi.org.uk</a>	07854 689730
<b>Margaret Myers</b>	<a href="mailto:margaretadviser@avonfwi.org.uk">margaretadviser@avonfwi.org.uk</a>	07854 746085
<b>Lorna Tarr</b>	<a href="mailto:lornatarr@avonfwi.org.uk">lornatarr@avonfwi.org.uk</a>	07702 453827

## AFWI Events November and December 2025

### HISTORY & HERITAGE OF BRISTOL TOUR

**Tuesday 18 November 2025**  
**From 11.00am to 3.30pm**

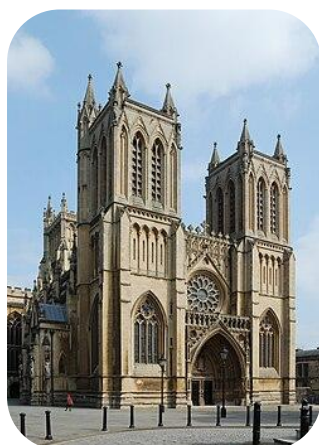
Get a different take on Bristol with this lovely dual behind the scenes tour of the Wills Memorial Building and Bristol Cathedral.

Meeting at 11.00am, we will visit the Wills Memorial Building first. See behind the grand façade and experience the splendour of the Great Hall, Council Chamber and ornate libraries. The view from the top of the Wills Tower, some 68 metres high, is unparalleled and gives the impression that Park Street is flat!

This tour takes approximately 50 minutes, following which, members will have the opportunity to purchase their own lunch from the many cafes/restaurants in the area before wandering down the hill to Bristol Cathedral for our second tour meeting at 2.00pm.



Please note that the Wills Memorial Building tour includes steps up to the top of the tower. Although, members can opt out of the tower part of the tour if they prefer.



At 2.15pm, we will join one of Bristol Cathedral's dedicated tour guides as they take us on a journey spanning 900 years of history and architecture of the extraordinary Cathedral. From the tale of St Jordan of Bristol through to the ordination of the first women priests in 1994.

The Bristol Cathedral tour which takes 45 – 60 minutes is flat and involves no climbing.

**There are only 25 places available for this event.**

**Members Only: £16.00**

**Closing Date: Monday 13 October 2025**

### WIRE WORK WORKSHOP

**Tuesday 2 December 2025, from 10.00am to 12.00noon at The Conygre Hall, North Road, Timsbury, Nr Bath, BA2 0JQ**



Holly Berkley is a wire worker and teacher based in Somerset. With 37 years' experience in wire working and ten years in teaching, Holly has been featured in the national press, including Vogue magazine, and on live TV.

During this project we will be using hammers and miniature anvils, wire winders and pliers to make either a cushioned 'A Christmas Star Decoration' with beautiful beaten spiral accents or 'A Tree of life pendant and jewellery set', which would make a great gift or to keep for yourself.



Suitable for all abilities. All tools and materials are supplied.

Tea and coffee will be provided.

**Members Only: £35.00**

**Closing Date: Monday 3 November 2025**

### AFWI CAROL SERVICE

**Tuesday 16 December 2025**  
**From 2.00pm to 3.00pm**

**St Mary's Church, Castle Street, Thornbury, Bristol BS35 1HQ**



The Federation's Carol Service this year will be held at St Mary's Church in Thornbury where the AFWI Choir, conducted by Jane Kern, will lead the singing, accompanied by the church organist.

There is limited parking on the road outside the church and in adjacent roads, as well as three public car parks in Thornbury. The town is also on several bus routes so please use public transport and car shares where possible.

**Members: £7.00**

**Non-Members: £9.00**

**Closing Date: Monday 3 November 2025**



## Volunteer Readers for The AFWI Carol Service

If you would like to read at this year's AFWI Carol Service, please contact WI House: [office@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:office@avonfwi.org.uk) by Monday 3 November and we will forward your details to the organisers.

## AFWI Environment & Craft Team

Dear Members - I hope you have all had a good summer and have coped well with the temperatures we have been experiencing lately. By the time you read this, I hope we will have had some rain.

This year's visit to Organic Blooms was a very enjoyable and interesting morning, once again, in glorious sunshine (see photos). I am pleased to confirm that we are working with Organic Blooms to put on something different in 2026, so do keep a 'look out' for what I'm sure will be another popular event.

Disappointingly, we have had to cancel the Collage Workshop due to low numbers, but looking ahead to the rest of this year we have: the visit to Bletchley Park in September; the two History Talks in October; a Public Affairs Day in November; and the Wire Work Workshop in December.

We are also inviting Candy Adkins back in the new year to give her Amy Johnson talk.

Meanwhile, I am sad to say that Alex has resigned from the team, due to her work commitments – we will miss you Alex, thank you for your time and efforts - we all wish you well and hope to see you at some events soon.

As you can imagine, losing a member of an already small team is challenging but we are working hard to put on a varied programme for members, and have more interesting events in the pipeline.

Observers are always welcome to come to our planning meetings.

**Sue, Maureen, Linda, Ruth and Angie**  
**AFWI Environment & Craft Team**



## Skylarks WI Virtual – 'wherever you are so are we'

AFWI is excited to announce the formation in June 2025 of a new virtual WI, Skylarks!



There are over 20 virtual WIs in England, Wales, and the Islands, providing opportunities for new members to connect and engage with the WI.

Virtual WIs are a fantastic initiative, reaching out to women who may not be able to attend a

meeting in person due to access requirements, working hours or travel; providing a convenient way to join the WI community from the comfort of our own homes or when we are away.

Are you already a member of a WI but would like the opportunity to attend a meeting virtually, why not join as a multi member?

Skylarks WI meets on the 1st Monday evening of the month at 7.30pm via Zoom. Whether you are thinking of friends and family who may be interested in joining or fancy trying something different yourself, the first meeting is free, so share the good news or give it a go!

For further information, including questions in respect of the subscription rate, please contact: [skylarkswi@gmail.com](mailto:skylarkswi@gmail.com)

## AFWI Federation Holidays 2026

### THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE & HISTORY OF THE EAST MIDLANDS

Departing 5 October 2026 for five days from £719

#### Accommodation

We stay four nights at the 4\* Delta by Marriott Belfry on the outskirts of Nottingham. Facilities at the hotel include a restaurant, bar, indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, sauna, and a steam room. All of our allocated Standard Rooms are ensuite and feature television, and tea & coffee making facilities.

#### Features

- 4\* hotel
- Half board accommodation
- All excursion travel & guided tours included
- Entrance fees to non-National Trust properties included
- Blue Badge guide on Days 2 to 4
- Executive coach throughout

#### What we will see

- Baddesley Clinton NT
- Cromford Mills - guided tour of the Mill Yard
- Crich Tramway Village
- Hardwick Hall & Gardens NT
- Workhouse at Southwell NT
- Framework Knitters Museum – guided tour
- National Space Centre
- Packwood House NT



There's certainly a diverse range of venues to visit on this holiday to the East Midlands, so I'm looking forward to seeing lots of you on there.

For further information on this tour, please contact the Group Organiser, Sue Murphy: [federationholidays@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:federationholidays@avonfwi.org.uk).

To view and share this tour online – click on **View Your Tour** at [www.tailored-travel.co.uk](http://www.tailored-travel.co.uk) and quote **afwi262**.

**Closing date:** Friday 17 April 2026 or before if the holiday is full.

### THE HISTORY & VINTAGE RAILWAYS OF THE ISLE OF MAN

Departing 27th April 2026 for five days from £1,219

There are still a few spaces available on this holiday, however, the closing date is the 27 August 2025, after that please contact me for availability as it will depend on whether there are flights.

#### Notes:

- We meet at Bristol Airport for our direct scheduled easyJet flight to the Isle of Man.
- Where entry is not included, those with National Trust or English Heritage membership can get in free.
- Please remember to make sure you have a valid passport with at least 6 months left on your passport or suitable ID for this trip.
- For further information go to [www.tailored-travel.co.uk](http://www.tailored-travel.co.uk), click on View Your Tour and quote afwi261.
- Email: [federationholidays@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:federationholidays@avonfwi.org.uk)

## WI Lottery



The WI Lottery is an exciting weekly lottery that raises money for all levels of the WI.

60% of ticket sales help finance the aims and objectives of the WI at national, regional and local levels – 40% to local WIs and 20% to a central fund to be shared between NFWI and federations. The funds are sent directly to regional federations and local WIs' accounts every month.

#### Raising funds for your WI?

A WI Lottery is a no risk option because it's absolutely free to set up! A small percentage from every ticket sold to is taken to cover the costs of running the lottery

With just 50 tickets a week you can raise £1,040 every year. Tickets are £1 a week with a top prize of £25,000!

#### Raising funds for the Federation

If your WI has not signed up to receive their share, please consider supporting the Federation by visiting our page to buy tickets:

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

**Judith Massey**  
AFWI Joint Chair



## 2025 AFWI Summer Lunch

Saltford Golf Course was a wonderful venue, on one of the hottest days of the year. Over 100 members came together to enjoy a super lunch with guest speaker Bristol Old Vic archivist, historian and guide, Andrew Stocker. We particularly appreciated the table centrepieces, kindly brought by WIs, which added a special touch and were a delightful addition, enhancing the overall atmosphere of the event.

AFWI Trustee Ruth Smith showed us how Rodway Rubies WI collect loose change to donate to ACWW: <https://acww.org.uk> and Judith Massey reminded members the WI is a charity too. Sue Murphy brought us up to date regarding up and coming events urging us all to book early, and I talked about the new virtual Skylarks WI, which current members are also welcome to join as multi members.



Andrew Stocker proved a wonderful choice of Speaker this year where we were entertained and educated about the Bristol Old Vic Theatre, famous for being the UK's oldest continuously working theatre. We watched with interest a presentation about the Theatre's history, archives and current productions. Andrew wanted us to know it was famous actor Peter O'Toole who proved instrumental many years ago outlining his vision for the re-modelling of the Theatre much of which we are familiar with today.

Andrew had so many stories to tell, having been a part of the theatre since the early eighties, and also kindly answered our questions after lunch too. Please visit the theatre either to a production or one of the guided tours and you may come across Andrew showing you a few of the rare £50 coins minted as a permanent pass and thank you to investors at the time - many are still unaccounted for so keep a lookout as you never know!

For further information, visit: <https://bristololdvic.org.uk>

**Lorna Tarr**  
AFWI Joint Chair



## 2025 AFWI Skittles Tournament Final

Our huge congratulations go to Old Sodbury WI on winning the 2025 AFWI Skittles Tournament Final against Kenn WI. The match was very close with both teams producing high scores although neither team managed to achieve the elusive 9 pins!

It was a fun competitive night with both teams bringing supporters. The Final, held at Cleve Rugby Football Club, proved a great venue and the ploughman's supper was enjoyed by all.

A big thank you to all our teams who entered this year.

**Debbie Millar**  
Art & Leisure Team



Photo above of the winning team with AFWI Joint Chair Lorna Tarr

# AFWI Events Diary 2024/25

Event	Date	Venue	Price Closing Date
DAY VISIT TO BLETCHLEY PARK	Wednesday 10 September 2025 Coach pick-ups: - 7.00am Keynsham (Ashton Way Car Park) - 7.30am Tesco Eastville - 8.00am Almondsbury Bus Stop (A38 lay-by BS32 4AA)	The Almondsbury Inn & Lounge, BS32 4AA, has kindly agreed to allow us to use their car park. Please pay £5 at the Reception Desk and provide your car's registration number.	CLOSED
COMMUNITY CHOIR SINGING WORKSHOP	Wednesday 17 September 2025 From 1.00pm to 4.00pm	Wick Village Hall, Manor Road, Wick, BS30 5QJ	CANCELLED UNDER SUBSCRIBED
2025 AFWI ANNUAL MEETING	Tuesday 23 September 2025 From 10.15am to 3.30pm	BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RF (for Sat Nav)	CLOSED
HISTORY TALK: THE NEWPORT MEDIEVAL SHIP	Thursday 23 October 2025 From 2.00pm to 3.30pm	St Edyth's Church, Avonleaze, Sea Mills, Bristol BS9 2HU	Members: £12.00 Non-Members: £14.00 Closing Date: Tuesday 16 September 2025
HISTORY TALK: THE WOMEN WHO BUILT BRISTOL – VOL 3	Wednesday 29 October 2025 from 2.00pm to 3.30pm	Cleeve Village Hall, Main Road, Cleeve, Bristol, BS49 4PF (A370)	Members: £12.00 Non-Members: £14.00 Closing Date: Monday 22 September 2025
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DAY	Thursday 13 November 2025 10.15am for a 10.30start to 3.30pm	Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, 57-59 Broad Street, Chipping Sodbury BA37 6AD	Members: £17.00 Non-Members: £19.00 Closing Date: Monday 6 October 2025
HISTORY & HERITAGE OF BRISTOL TOUR	Tuesday 18 November 2025 From 11.00am to 3.30pm	Tours of The Wills Memorial Building Tower and Bristol Cathedral	Members Only: £16.00 Closing Date: Monday 13 October 2025
WIRE WORK WORKSHOP	Tuesday 2 December 2025 From 10.00am to 12.00 noon	The Conygre Hall, North Road, Timsbury, Nr Bath BA2 0JQ	Members Only: £35.00 Closing Date: Monday 3 November 2025
AFWI CAROL SERVICE	Tuesday 16 December 2025 From 2.00pm to 3.00pm	St Mary's Thornbury, Castle Street, Thornbury, Bristol BS35 1HQ	Members: £7.00 Non-Members: £9.00 Closing Date: Monday 3 November 2025

## The small print:

- Members, please apply through your WI Secretary. Please let us know if you have any requirements in respect of accessing an event.
- WI secretaries, please collate your members' applications and email to [events@avonfwi.org.uk](mailto:events@avonfwi.org.uk) or send the application form to WI House. **Event applications need to arrive in WI House by 12.00 noon on the closing date.**
- We will send an invoice to your WI Treasurer after places have been allocated. WIs are encouraged to collate invoices as appropriate and use BACS transfer. Treasurers, please note: a 50p surcharge per cheque paid to the Federation.
- Please indicate if in the event of a ballot your WI would wish to withdraw. Failure to complete this section may result in your application being withdrawn.
- **Please note places cancelled after an event's closing date will not be refunded.**
- We no longer issue tickets. We will email confirmation of the places allocated to the contact named on the application form. If the contact is unable to provide an email address, they will need to provide a SAE. Event organisers will have a list of the members expected at events.
- Please note that AFWI event organisers will be taking photos at events to be used in AFWI printed and online publicity. If you would prefer not to be photographed, please let the photographer know.