

Red Rose News

The Lancashire Federation of Women's Institutes

Issue 1 • 2026



WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF YOUR NEWSLETTER FOR 2026

This issue contains articles on your many and varied Christmas celebrations and also looks forward to the new year and springtime. I write this towards the end of January, but already the days are becoming a little longer, there are signs of snowdrops and daffodils coming through and we can see new growth on trees and hedges, which always provides a welcome boost.

We love hearing about all of your news and events – please do keep your articles coming in. Guidelines and deadlines for submission can be found on page 6.

Emma and Pam

EDITORIAL TEAM



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A Message From Our Chairman

Welcome to the first edition of Red Rose News of the new year and a Happy and Prosperous 2026 to you all.

Christmas is always a busy time for many of us and as I write this all my decorations are packed away for another year. This year I bought a potted Christmas tree which is now out in the garden for next year (note to self – remember to water in the hot summer we anticipate having) and the cards have been sorted into those I can make tags from for next year and those that need to go into the paper bin. My recycling quest will continue throughout 2026 and, as our local council rules have changed and much more food packaging can be recycled, but I am trying to buy from places that don't use unnecessary plastic. It is Green Heart month in February and a lot of you will be making green hearts to give out to remind people to look after our planet. Look out for more ideas to help save it and tell us what your WI has done through the next edition of RRN. Closing date for submissions is 5 March 2026 – just a suggestion!

Did you take part in the National RSPB Bird Count? For those interested in ornithology and wildlife we have arranged a self-drive visit to Leighton Moss reserve near Silverdale, a haven for wildlife and migrating birds.

It is nearly subscription renewal date, 1st April. Please try to get your subscription to your treasurer by then to help her to meet the deadline. It is always a good time of year to recruit new members. Promote all the great things your WI has planned for 2026 – 2027 and get involved with your local community to get noticed. LFWI has lots of events planned, including another Cheese Tasting event towards the north of the county. Watch out for your secretary's announcements at your monthly meeting and announcements on our LFWI website. Have fun at the annual Quiz Night - the overall winners will be announced at the Annual Meeting - and thank you to the WIs who are hosting.

I hope to see many of you at the LFWI Annual Meeting in April at Lowther Pavilion in Lytham, where we will be celebrating our past year and presenting awards and certificates to members and WIs.

I am looking forward to meeting more members in 2026 and visiting more WIs (don't forget to send me an invite to your meeting or event). Best Wishes for a fantastic WI Year.

Heather Williams



Do you have a story to share? See page 6 for important information about submitting editorial...



Around the WIs

MEETINGS, BIRTHDAYS & PARTIES...

Christmas was the theme for the **AINSDALE NATTERJACKS'** November meeting. The crafters had made beautiful items which were sold to raise funds for a local charity. The speaker was Pat Armstrong, who returned to demonstrate the making of wonderful Christmas floral decorations. These were raffled to raise funds for charity.

In November, the walking group did the Hightown Loop (six miles). December was a shorter, winter walk, and they were very lucky to have a bright, sunny day. The numbers in the group have increased, and it is lovely to welcome new members.

The December meeting was a fun afternoon with some of the members performing a hilarious alternative version of the pantomime 'Cinderella'. There was a wonderful buffet provided by 'Deli Mio', a local delicatessen, and a prize was awarded for the best Christmas outfit. The meeting ended with quizzes and carols.

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ANSDELL & FAIRHAVEN WI's gardening group, The Green Goddesses, has formed the perfect partnership with the local Ansdell



in Bloom group of volunteers and together they make Ansdell a lovely place to live. The Goddesses have diligently maintained the Forest Drive area for Ansdell in Bloom and have liaised closely with them through plant contributions as well as raising money with plant sales at WI meetings. They turn up in all weathers with their own tools and a high-vis smile.

All that hard work and regular commitment paid off when Ansdell in Bloom swept the board with three awards – Art in the Community, Gold Award and Best in the North-West – plus The Urban Community Cup. Bren and Julie from the Goddesses were with them at the award ceremony in Bolton to share the joy. The ladies are a wonderful embodiment of what the WI represents. Bravo, Green Goddesses!

BANKS WI held its annual meeting in November at Meols Court Lounge, where Alyson was re-elected as President. Members enjoyed butternut squash soup and mincemeat crumble prepared by Alyson, followed by a Christmas stall where small purchases could be made.

At the December meeting, the final one of 2025, members were entertained by the Yuks Ukulele Band, who played a mixture of Christmas songs and other well-known favourites.

Their January meeting was rather low on numbers due to a bad weather forecast. The speaker was Barbara Eyes, who spoke about the evolution of bathrooms, particularly the many ways people once coped without indoor facilities. The talk brought back many childhood memories. Members also discussed this year's resolutions and voted for "Accessible public toilet facilities to promote dignity, health and social inclusion" as their chosen resolution.

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A lovely lady called Bez Cooper visited **BARTON WI** in November. She entertained members with a slideshow about her life as a 'Tiller Girl' dancer. She shared many stories of her time at The London Palladium and her travels around the UK and abroad, including memories of famous stars she worked with and the friendships she made.

December is party time for BARTON WI members. A glass of wine on arrival at the monthly meeting got everyone into the party mood. After a brief business résumé, members enjoyed an excellent buffet supper provided by Churchtown ladies, now quite a tradition. Entertainment was provided by Nick, who sang popular songs from the sixties and seventies, getting everyone's feet tapping. He finished with Christmas favourites and had everyone singing 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. The enjoyable evening was rounded off with a few Christmas carols.

To cheer up the post-Christmas and New Year cold January, **BLACKPOOL WI** held the first meeting of their new Film Theatre and Dine Club with a viewing of 'The Housemaid', a tense psychological thriller, followed by drinks and a discussion. The second film watched was



'Hamnet', the story of William Shakespeare's son who died tragically young and partly inspired the play Hamlet.

A theatre trip to look forward to in March is Come From Away, the musical dramatisation of the thousands of airline passengers diverted to Gander, Newfoundland, and welcomed by the locals following the September 11th attacks.

This new group, which includes a meal afterwards, is a welcome addition to the regular programme and is proving very popular. It is good to have something to look forward to, especially in winter.



competition, which the village was proud to win in several categories. The bike was also on display (converted to a Santa sleigh!) during the lead up to Christmas as part of the village decorations and annual Advent Windows event. During Advent, in Bretherton, a new house lights up a window display each evening until 24 are illuminated by Christmas Eve, giving the village a lovely, festive atmosphere.

ECCLESTON WI's AGM was supported by LFWI Adviser Wendy Holbeche. The committee was elected and the Secretary and Treasurer presented their reports. Members were encouraged to sign up early for LFWI events or suggest places to visit. The President was unanimously re-elected and thanks were extended to all.

Susan Osborne performed at the Christmas Party, playing carols and songs and reciting 'Lanky' poems and tales about Lancashire customs and

sayings. Everyone took part in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', waving or bobbing up and down – great fun. Members then enjoyed a Jacob's Join and raffle. The

Salver for the most points gained in the year's monthly competitions was presented by the President to Joyce Critchley, with Helen Mason and Freda Thomas close runners-up. Gifts for homeless people were collected and passed to a local charity.



FRECKLETON WI held a 'crafty' evening in October with tutor Karen Hope, who demonstrated the art of furoshiki, a Japanese form of gift wrapping using fabric. At tables covered with colourful square scarves, bangles and rubber bands, Karen showed members how to create beautiful gift wrapping using only a scarf, craftily folded and knotted. She demonstrated ten different ways of wrapping boxes, bottles and small gifts, with no sewing, Sellotape or glue required.

Despite dreadful conditions, there was a good turnout for the November meeting, where members heard an update from Nigel Flemen about his son Dan, who is now home after three years in hospital. Nigel described the transformation of their house by the BBC DIY SOS team and a huge group of volunteers, completed in just nine days. Dan is thrilled to be home and, with good support from Lancashire County Council, the family is now focusing on rehabilitation. Dan is looking forward to resuming his education at the Pear Tree School in Kirkham. The programme is due to be aired in the spring.

The Christmas meeting began with a game of 'Steal a Gift', followed by a buffet and festive entertainment from 'Just Jay', who sang songs from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s along with Christmas favourites. Games included 'Roll a Snowman', and the Decorated Jam Jar competition was won by Margaret Thompson. Michaela Bass won the 2024/2025 Competition Cup. Kathy Gemmell was presented with flowers in recognition of her work as President and wished everyone a Happy Christmas and a safe journey home.



Do you have a story to share? See page 6 for important information about submitting editorial...





LONGTON WI explored the 'Extraordinary Women' who helped establish the WI through a theatrical presentation of the same name. Adelaide

Hoodless from Canada, where the WI concept originated, spoke of the tragic loss of her infant son and her determination to improve women's education in childcare. Fellow Canadian Madge Watt encouraged women to form the first WI on Anglesey in 1915.

Lady Denman followed, accompanied by her secretary Phyllis Wickham, speaking about her work supporting causes such as the Women's Land Army and birth control advice. Suffragist Grace Haddow then described her role in devising the NFWI constitution.

To bring the presentation up to date, WI member Margaret spoke about WI crafts, Country Markets and campaigns such as Keep Britain Tidy, ending with the current resolutions. The production combined creativity, learning and a strong sense of purpose, helping everyone appreciate the extraordinary women who shaped the WI.

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The **LYTHAM BELLES** Christmas season started in November with a craft evening where members made their own Christmas tree ornaments. It was a fabulous evening where members learned how to paint ceramic ornaments such as snowmen, stars, Father Christmas, penguins or any snowy scene they wanted. No matter the 'talent' level, all were able to make at least two ornaments. They were fired and returned at the December meeting and the results were amazing. The colours were vibrant and the definition was impressive. Even for the less artsy, the result was impressive. Members felt it was one of the most fabulous educational craft meetings they had.



In November, **MILNROW & DISTRICT (MaD) WI** had a speaker who was an expert in first aid in the home. To build on this and support the Bystanders can be Lifesavers Resolution, in February St John's Ambulance will be giving members a talk on CPR, the use of defibrillators and preserving female dignity.

In December, members enjoyed a fun and very festive Christmas meeting with a Jacob's Join, quiz and carols. The Christmas craft club made Christmas trees, Mr and Mrs Santa Claus and a Christmas gong. The writers and scribblers group spent a lovely evening in Manchester soaking up the sights and sounds of the markets to inspire their Christmas journals, all topped off with a warming drink.

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In November, Roger Hussey, Fraud Safeguarding Officer with Lancashire Constabulary, came to speak to **RIBBY WITH WREA WI** members about scams. He highlighted how this type of fraud was such a cruel crime, robbing victims of their self-confidence as well as their money, causing them to doubt their own judgement and lose trust in others.

Romance scams are particularly difficult to deal with, as the scammers build a very strong relationship with the victim, who wants to help when asked for money and sometimes can't accept that they have been defrauded.

Roger gave advice about reducing the risk of being scammed, such as using a different password for every account and being wary about unsolicited phone calls from banks, etc. He also gave advice on what to do if you are suspicious about calls, texts or emails that don't seem right, or think you have actually been scammed.

The December meeting was the Christmas party, when members enjoyed the usual delicious food and presents from Father Christmas. However, the real treat of the evening was the entertainment provided by six members from Longton WI. They performed their own version of Cinderella. It was really hilarious and described as 'totally bonkers', with the ugly sisters coming to a very nasty end!



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...AROUND THE WIs

ST ANNES ON SEA WI enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea at the Glendower Hotel, with beautiful food, a singer and a great atmosphere – even the sun shone through the windows.

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At TATHAM FELLS WI's Annual Meeting on 14 October, Gill Gilbertson was elected President. A Hundred Years of Fashion was the highlight of the evening; a film of the fashion show performed by members in 2009. Although some of the cast have moved away and some passed away, many were still there recalling the fun of rehearsals and the three performances they gave at the time to packed audiences, all in the Old School.

Committee members demonstrated Christmas cooking at their November meeting. Kath Dickinson made swirls as Ruth Garstang gave a hilarious commentary. She cut a roll of puff pastry lengthways and filled it with cooled, chopped red onion, bacon, grated cheese, chives and parsley, finishing with a sprinkling of paprika. It was then rolled and cut into pieces to be baked. Mary Kidd made chocolate segments by swirling melted white chocolate with brown and, before it set, scattering on many goodies including chopped nuts, apricots, marshmallows and ginger. Everyone ate too many swirls and segments at the end of the demonstration.

Andrea Ball, a member of **TATHAM FELLS WI** and Sidesaddle Champion, who lives locally, showed slides and played a video with music as she told the story of her life with horses and her many successes riding sidesaddle in magnificent riding outfits. Starting very young, she had a series of horses until her present one, Pink Pony, a 14-hand Cob, which she rode with the Vale of Lune Harriers. Her audience admired the way she persevered with learning to ride sidesaddle and compete and win in shows including the National Sidesaddle Show and the Concours d'Elegance. Andrea brought four of the many elegant costumes which she had made herself for each of the shows using purchases from the Hub at Bentham. There are many photos of Andrea riding in costume on the internet. She is tall and stately, looks magnificent and is also very talented at making her own costumes.



TARLETON WI

involved the local community in decorating their villages for Remembrance Day following the launch of their Community Poppy Appeal in March 2025. Knitters and crocheters made an astonishing 3,823 poppies. Displays included postbox toppers, camouflage nets and church decorations across Tarleton and Hesketh Bank. The WI thanked everyone who contributed, braving the weather to install and later remove the displays.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS TEAM

Have you heard of Show the Love? It's a nationwide annual campaign by the WI and hundreds of other organisations to raise awareness about the climate and nature crisis. All WIs are encouraged to take part in any way that they wish.

How about making green hearts for your local school? Or making some green heart bunting for your village hall? Or asking members to bring in a photo of a special spot that they love – or a favourite activity in the natural world – and make a giant collage to show what we all value and want to protect. Whatever your WI chooses to do will be a great conversation starter – we know that the vast majority of people are concerned about the impacts of climate change but many of us think we're alone in our concern. When we realise that there are others who share our concern, then it's much easier to take action together.

So do something joyful in February – Show the Love and share it with your friends and family. You could even send a heart to your local MP & councillors so that they know that caring for the only home our species has matters to us in the WI.

You may like to share some of your ideas in the next Red Rose newsletter so please send in your photos, with a short piece of text, to editorial@lfwi.org.uk.

Maria Gee

CLIMATE AMBASSADOR



Do you have a story to share? See page 6 for important information about submitting editorial...





We're always looking for news and events which will be of interest to our readers. To give your submission the best chance of being published, please take a look through our editorial guidelines:

- Take note of the submission deadline - items for the next newsletter must reach us by **Thurs 5th March**.
- Email to editorial@lfwi.org.uk
- Send items as a Microsoft Word document. Please note that PDFs are not suitable for inclusion.
- Include 'Item for Newsletter' as your email subject heading and be sure to include the name of your WI.
- Photos must be sent as a separate attachment.
- Please be aware that items might have to be edited.
- We cannot guarantee to publish every submission and the final decision lies with the Board of Trustees.

FLYING VISITS:

- Short snippets of news.
- Maximum 50 words.
- Photos are optional.

TRIBUTES:

- Maximum 50 words.
- No photos please.

NEWS FROM THE WIs & ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

- Please only submit **one** article per issue.
- If sending information on more than one activity or meeting, please include **all** of the information in a single email attachment.
- Indicative word limit per article - 150 words.
- Photo optional - if submitting a photo, please send **one** clear, relevant image as a separate attachment (please don't embed your photo in your word attachment).
- Please don't send photo collages as we cannot use these.



NEXT ISSUE:

The next issue is due for publication in week commencing **13th April**. As well as your WI news, we would particularly welcome the following items:

- Charity make photos and reports.
- Recipes.
- A quiz for readers to complete (please provide the answers).
- Articles on your forthcoming activities/plans.
- Review of a book or film that you have recently enjoyed.
- Anything topical that you think other WI members might enjoy reading about.

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

EDITORIAL TEAM

Pam Aspden - Bretherton & Croston WIs
Emma Gillinder - Tarleton WI

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

FOR ISSUE 2

Thurs 5th March

Email: editorial@lfwi.org.uk

TRIBUTES



It is with great sadness that **BANKS WI** reports the death of two longstanding members, Sheila Francis and Barbara Brown, who have both passed away recently. They also report with sadness that Marion Johnson, a former member, passed away at Christmas.

It is with great sadness that **CATON WI** learnt of the passing of Mary Headley on 25th September, shortly after her 90th birthday. Mary had been a member of the WI for over 50 years, and a member and a mainstay of Caton WI for 40 of those years. Mary held every office in the WI - she was a member of the Board of Trustees, a County Advisor, a judge of 'The Best Kept Village' competition and a keen member of Ladies in Harmony choir.

In September 2025, **BALDERSTONE & DISTRICT WI** lost a very dear friend, Joan Woolmington, who was the mainstay of every group she joined. She was on the committee, taking charge of all the hostesses for meetings as well as making sure that all members who needed assistance had someone to call. Joan was also on the Clitheroe Show committee and was always at the forefront of any fundraising that was needed. Apart from the WI, Joan worked on the Mellor Brook Community Centre committee and was the person you asked if you needed to know something. Joan was a member of Ribchester WI and was then a member of Salmesbury WI before it closed and amalgamated with Balderstone and District, probably serving for over 60 years. Joan is sadly missed.



Flying Visits...



ACCRINGTON & DISTRICT WI had a craft evening making Christmas wreaths and Christmas table decorations. Most of the foliage used was collected the day before from members' gardens or from their walks. (No trees were vandalised in the collection of the foliage.) Everyone went home happy with their decorations and this is likely to become an annual event.

LEYLAND WI invited friends and fellow WI members to join the celebrations for their Christmas meeting. There was entertainment from the Broughton Handbell Ringers, a lovely rendition of Come Now with Awe by two ladies from the Clayton le Woods Singers and a selection of amusing and poignant poems read by Leyland members. The concert was followed by festive refreshments and a splendid time was had by all. It was particularly nice to see several ladies from WIs in the Central and South Ribble Cluster. The donations bucket raised a healthy amount to be divided between St Catherine's Hospice and the Rosemere Cancer Foundation.



LUMB IN ROSENDALE WI members produced some beautiful handmade items for this year's Charity Make. Two members presented Rossendale Hospice with their donations and received the following words of thanks: 'We would like to express

our thanks and gratitude to the ladies at Lumb in Rossendale Women's Institute for generously

donating a variety of handmade knitted items to Rossendale Hospice. We are truly grateful to receive these beautiful items and admire the hard work and dedication that has gone into creating them.' The WI's poppies also really set the scene at Goodshaw Baptist Church Remembrance Service and were very much admired and appreciated by those attending.



MOSS SIDE WI had lots of fun celebrating their 90th birthday during 2025. In August they had a lovely canal cruise with a delicious cream tea. November was their birthday month, and they celebrated by singing and dancing with the two lovely ladies from 'Pink Vintage' and some invited guests from other WIs and LFWI. Of course, there was also a birthday cake made by one of their members. In December, members had a lesson on making Christmas decorations.

PEARLS OF POULTON WI

Garden Group had a fabulous afternoon making Christmas wreaths, wearing their Christmas jumpers and sampling mulled wine and cakes. They hope to make this an annual event.



After a truly inspirational and informative talk by Ian Shearer from Merseyside and Cheshire Blood Bikes, **VIADUCT VIOLETS WI**, Newton-le-Willows, have adopted them as their local charity for the next year. Members were amazed to find out that they are a non-profit-making charity and everyone involved is a volunteer. Their vital work supports the NHS by carrying urgently required blood, medicines, samples and breast milk between hospitals, clinics and laboratories. It was the perfect way to end their AGM and President Lorraine Nicholls certainly enjoyed the bike!



SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

Chinese New Year is celebrated by communities across the UK, with lively festivities at the heart of cities such as London, Liverpool and Manchester. In Manchester, the celebrations often include a colourful parade filled with lanterns, dragons and dancers, accompanied by the unmistakable crackle of fireworks. This year marks the Year of the Horse, a time traditionally associated with energy and optimism. What better moment to bring a taste of the celebration into your own kitchen with this classic sweet and sour chicken dish?

INGREDIENTS

- 2 chicken breast portions, cut into 1cm cubes or 4 chicken thighs cut into 1cm chunks
- 4 spring onions, cut into 2cm lengths or 1 onion chopped
- 1 green pepper, 1 red or orange pepper, deseeded and cut into large dice
- 1 small can pineapple chunks
- $\frac{1}{2}$ can water chestnuts, sliced
- 3 tbsps cider vinegar
- 2 tbsps brown sugar
- 2 tbsps tomato puree
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 heaped tbsp cornflour
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Stir-Fry Vegetables

Use a selection from the following and stir fry for 4 to 5 minutes in garlic or sesame oil:

Mange tout peas • Baby sweetcorn • Carrots • Green beans • Sliced mushrooms • Beansprouts • Spring onions • Sliced courgettes



METHOD

1. Prepare all ingredients.
2. Drain the juice from the pineapple into a jug and dice the pineapple.
3. Mix the cornflour with the juice, vinegar, sugar, tomato puree, soy sauce and sesame oil and make up to $\frac{1}{2}$ pint with cold water.
4. In a wok or deep pan heat the oil and fry the chicken for 5 minutes, add the onion and green pepper and pineapple and continue to stir fry for a further 5 to 10 minutes. Add the water chestnuts.
5. Pour the sauce ingredients into a wok and cook until they have thickened (about 3 - 5 minutes).
6. Serve with plain boiled rice and stir fry vegetables.

Scarlet
Corner

Kindness Begins With Me

I had a conversation at work and it began perfectly normally with someone saying, 'How are you today?' I replied, 'I'm having a fabulous day, thank you; how are you?' And he looked at me and he said, 'Your days are always fabulous or spectacular. When you just say that you are only OK, then I will know there is trouble.'

I had to think about it for a moment but he is right. Whenever someone asks how I am, I always say 'fabulous' as a minimum. Sometimes 'fantastic', or 'splendid' or 'yes, spectacular!' Even if I don't feel that way, I say it with as much enthusiasm as I can muster.

It makes me happier and, more often than not, it makes the person I am talking to smile if it doesn't produce a comment.

Well, it has given me something to aspire to, being fabulous was his comment at the end of the conversation. My son has a saying, fake it until you make it. Perhaps it is all in the attitude.

Emma Gillinder

TARLETON WI



Do you have a story to share? See page 6 for important information about submitting editorial...

