

Window on Berkshire

This Bulletin focuses on the major events coming up in the next few months, with details of the forthcoming Speaker Lunch, two Speaker Coffee & Cake meetings, and the date of the Annual Meeting.

We know many of you are very keen to attend events, so please keep an eye on the pages of the BFWI website which links to the TryBooking pages and lets you know what is coming up – and please don't delay in making a booking! We will always want to know the emergency contact details of those attending, and their names and WI: have those ready, and see you at one of the events very soon!

Federation events

Mix & Mingle at Henry Street Garden Centre in October was hugely successful, and lots of you came along to chat, to tell us what you were hoping we might organise in future, and to discuss any issues in your WI.

Our **next Mix & Mingle** is on Friday 21 November in the Mulberry and Thyme café at Hillier Garden Centre Newbury, which is the garden centre in Hermitage at RG18 9TG: this will be



from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. (There are two buildings, and we will be in the café in the building where they have the clothes.) Buy your coffee and cake and come and join us for a chat. Later, take the opportunity to browse the Christmas shop as well as the lovely plants! The Trustees will be there, so we hope to cover all of your queries or concerns; this includes Caroline who will try to answer

any of your queries about using your Microsoft 365 email account – we are keen to make that easier for you and to make sure you don't miss out on any important messages.

There's no cost to attend (other than whatever you want to eat/drink or buy from the garden centre): but if you are planning to come along we would be grateful if you would book in via TryBooking on <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FNNV>, just so that we can look out for you in the café.

Speakers and Speaker Meetings

The October Speaker Lunch sold out very quickly indeed. So you'll be pleased to know that we have a full schedule of events planned for 2026, including Speaker Lunches three times a year, and Speaker Coffee & Cake meetings in between. We know how much many of you enjoy the lunches, but sometimes it can be preferable to have a simpler meeting for a lower cost without losing the quality of the speaker.

Here's what we're offering for the next few months: please book into any of these on TryBooking using the links shown, or go to our BFWI website and go to the tab called Book Events to find the links to book online or to download the paper application form.

If you have any suggestions for future speakers or future venues, please get in touch with Katrina or Margot, who are the Trustees leading this area and who can be reached on k.sell@berkshirewi.co.uk or on m.gosney@berkshirewi.co.uk.



JANUARY SPEAKER LUNCH: January 26, 2026

***The truth illusion: the psychology of deception
detection***

Professor Coral Dando

Professor Dando is Professor of Psychology at the University of Westminster and teaches 'Psychology of Interviewing' to professionals from the police and security agencies. This is an opportunity to learn how to spot a liar – if you're a fan of the Traitors, then you will thoroughly enjoy hearing what she has to say.

Caversham Golf Club, (The Caversham), Mapledurham, Reading RG4 7UT
2 course meal and tea/coffee £32

Doors open at 11.15 for purchase of drinks and raffle tickets and to mingle.

Lunch starts at 12.00; speaker at approximately 13.00 followed by questions.

The link to book is on TryBooking at <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FMTW>

FEBRUARY SPEAKER COFFEE & CAKE: February 23, 2026

Dr Helen Fry: "Women in Intelligence: a hidden history"

Grazeley Village Hall, Church Lane, Grazeley, RG7 1LD

Coffee/tea and cake £10 – book at <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FNNL>

Doors open at 10.15 for refreshments, mingling, book sales and raffle ticket purchase

Helen will be bringing her books which you can buy, and which she will sign.

Talk will be from 11.00 to 12.00 followed by time for questions

Helen came to talk to us at the Annual Meeting in April but the time constraints meant that lots of you commented that you would have liked to have heard more. So we have asked her back! Helen has written over 25 books on WW2, and specialises in the intelligence roles taken on by both civilian and enlisted women. As government records are unsealed each January, she mines them for more information. She was recognised as 'A Woman of Achievement' at the 'Women of the Year Lunch' in 2022.



MARCH SPEAKER COFFEE & CAKE: March 16, 2026

Simon Brooker, 'Stokerpix': "Wildlife in Berkshire"

Woolhampton Village Hall, Bath Road, Woolhampton RG7 5RG

Coffee/tea and cake £10 – book at <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FNNO>

Doors open at 10.15 for refreshments, mingling, sales and raffle ticket purchase

Simon will be bringing a variety of his photos, cards and notelets for you to purchase.

Talk will be from 11.00 to 12.00 followed by time for questions

Simon started his photographic career initially by sharing photographs taken whilst out walking with his dogs. During Covid and Lockdown he became more interested in local nature. His real passion is both wildlife and photography as seen on his website <https://www.stokerpix.com/> where he regularly shares his new photographs. His calendar for 2026 can be viewed and ordered from his website.

Save the date...

Save the date for the Annual Meeting in April: this is on a Saturday this year, in response to requests from members who may not always be able to take time off work to attend. The meeting will be at the Abbey School in Reading, on **Saturday 25 April**, and our speaker will be Siobhan Clarke, TV historian, who will be giving her talk on "The Crown and the Cradle", about royal babies from early times to the present day, including Prince William. There will be lots more information to follow, but make sure you have 25 April in your diary!

Around the WIs

The Art Café in Whitchurch on Thames

The Art Café is a community café run by charities and local community groups, including WIs, who supply delicious home-made cakes and sell tea, coffee and juice to raise funds. Several Berkshire WIs are involved. It is well worth checking the diary of the café which can be found at <https://whitchurchonthames.com/diary.php>.

Pangbourne WI contacted the Bulletin to let us know they will be there on Saturday 8 November from 10.30 to 12.30 – why not nip into Pangbourne for some lovely shopping, then cross the toll bridge to the café to rest your feet?

The Art Café can be found at The Old Rectory Stables, High Street, Whitchurch RG8 7DF.

WI Walks and lunches

If your WI would like to host an event such as a 'walk & lunch' (maybe stopping at a pub?) or a walk with coffee & cake or afternoon tea & cake then please get in touch with trustee, Nina Derrick (n.derrick@berkshirewi.co.uk) who will be very pleased to hear from you. We notice at Berkshire Federation how pleased our WI members are to get together with other WI members across the county to enjoy a social time and make new friends.

Deadline Date: submissions for January/February issue of Berkshire News

As WIs receive this November Bulletin, the November/December issue of 'Berkshire News' will be delivered to your WI within the next few days.

Berkshire Federation are always delighted to receive photos with accompanying detail of WI activities across the county.

Deadline date for contributions to the January/February edition is Monday, 17 November, but please do submit your contribution as early as possible to make sure we have the space and to allow us to check details. Thank you.

Stash and Craft Sale

Are your cupboards brimming with craft supplies that you will never get round to using? Do you have drawers of patterns and shelves of fabrics or wool for a project that never quite materialised? **WI Berkshire Federation can help!**

We are holding another Stash and Craft Sale* at WI House, Mortimer, on Friday 6 and Saturday 7 February between 10.00 and 14.00 each day.

This will be an excellent opportunity to offload all of your unwanted fabric, wool, patterns and craft supplies by bringing them to WI House during opening hours, or by emailing Diane on federationsecretary@berkshirewi.co.uk to arrange collection. Then you will have the perfect opportunity to treat yourself to more stash at very reasonable prices!

*This is a fund-raising event for BFWI: any unwanted or unsold items will be passed after the sale to appropriate charity shops.

Crafting



This month's quilt block for the Bereavement Quilt Project is an applique dog design. If you want to make some blocks at home or, even better, get together with some WI friends for a quilting session, we would be delighted to receive the results. The demand for quilts is constant, and it is hard to keep up production!

You will find the instructions and the pattern on the Berkshire WI website on the page called Patterns (<https://berkshire.thewi.org.uk/>)

The Bereavement Patchwork Project meets at WI House (1st Monday of the month at 10.00am). To book to attend, go to <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FDZU>

Speaker Corner

We know how much WIs love discovering new and interesting speakers - and sometimes the best recommendations come from fellow members. That's why we are introducing 'Speaker Corner' where we will share details of speakers who are not listed in the official WI Speakers Book but have been tried, tested and thoroughly enjoyed by other WIs.

If your WI has recently hosted someone who made you laugh, think, or learn something new, we would love to hear about them!

Let's keep the inspiration (and great talks) flowing across the Berkshire WI community!

Here are three speakers I have heard recently whilst visiting WIs as a WI Liaison Trustee:

- **Derry Pope** - My Accidental Career in Music (£70 plus travel expenses)

Contact him on 07552505955 or on derrypope@hotmail.co.uk

Derry is a choir master currently running 8 choirs across Berkshire. He is flamboyant and talks about how he became a choir master. His talk is full of anecdotes, songs and serious moments.

- **Nigel Compton** - It Takes the Biscuit! (£40 plus travel expenses)

Contact him on 07818717565 or on <https://speakernet.co.uk/>

Nigel gives a fascination talk about the rise and decline of Huntley and Palmers as well as many other biscuit companies in Reading. His talk is full of details, humour and varieties of biscuits, many of which we had forgotten.

- **Sandra Pullen** - Hidden Tribes of Papua New Guinea (£50 plus travel expenses)

Contact her on 07818457804 or on classroomtalk.co.uk

Sandra has travelled extensively across the world. Her passion for different cultures is clear to see. She gave a fascinating talk about the different tribes with many detailed photographs.

Please send me - Carole Seymour - an email to c.seymour@berkshirewi.co.uk giving the speaker's name, contact details, topic and a few words why you'd recommend them.

Thank you.