



# FWINI Sub-Committee Reports

## AGM

Thursday, 28th March 2024

Europa Hotel, Belfast

### Arts Sub-Committee

It gives me great pleasure to present the Arts Sub-Committee Report on all our events for the 2024 AGM. The annual Music Festival held on Saturday, 22nd April 2023 in Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall was a great success, with choirs from the Quoile and Slemish Areas, and the Institute choirs of Armoyle, Kells & Connor and Richhill entering nine different classes from Choral Folk to Sacred, own choice ensembles, and solo entrants. The ladies from Templepatrick WI provided welcome morning refreshments and everyone agreed that by bringing packed lunches, there was more time for the competitions, and it made for an earlier finish. The adjudication by Dr. Jayne Moore was excellent. Her constructive and encouraging assessments given following each class were very much appreciated.

The wonderful variety of artwork provided by our talented members for sale at the Balmoral Show in May 2023 made a wonderful and colourful exhibition. The Committee members were kept busy with sales of scarves and notelets and helping in the tearoom.

Following on from the success of the Open Days at WI Headquarters for the Federation's 90th Anniversary, it was decided that on 21st August 2023, the Sub-Committee Chairmen would host a cream tea for the past Chairmen and Office Bearers, and we would arrange a small display of members' artwork. We would then take this display, along with membership forms and past magazines, as handouts to the Belfast City Autumn Fair in Botanic Gardens on 23rd and 24th September 2023 to promote the Federation.

A successful and very enjoyable Festival of The Spoken Word was held in Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall on Saturday 14th October 2023 with a total of 31 entries over six classes. Morning refreshments were provided by Templepatrick WI. The adjudicator, Louise Nelson from Ballymena Academy, praised the members for the variety of prepared speeches, poetry and prose, and gave professional and encouraging critiques at the end of each class.

The Annual Coffee Morning and Arts Festival was held at WI Headquarters on Friday 9th February 2024. With the theme '*Nature's Symphony: Celebrating Wildlife and Landscapes*'. The judging by Jacquie Brachi and Carmel Kennedy took place on 7th February, when they admired the wonderful variety of the submitted work and agreed that by keeping the 3D Decoupage to an Open theme, we had more entries this year. The Coffee Morning was very well attended and although the number of painting entries was down on last year, the standard was very high. The ballot was well supported and the sales table, with the addition of scarves and handbags, did well.

We now look forward to the Music Festival on Saturday, 27th April in Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall when the Mezzo Soprano, Sheelagh Greer will adjudicate the competition and we hope that the choirs will be supported by a good audience attendance.

My thanks to all the Arts Committee members who have worked so well together – tirelessly, organising all our events along with commitments in their own Institutes and Areas. We look forward to the continuing promotion of the arts within the Federation, continuing to make small improvements in all we do and if we all do that, that is where change happens. We appreciate the work of the office staff and thank Mary, Kathleen and Caroline for all the work they do.

**Lesley Dowds**  
**Arts Sub-Committee Chairman**

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### Balmoral Sub-Committee

It's hard to believe that, in just over a month's time, the Balmoral Committee will return to the Showgrounds to set up for this year's Show, which runs from Wednesday, 15th to Saturday, 18th May 2024. Preparations are well underway, and on Saturday, 11th we will 'load up' and transport all the necessary equipment to the Annex Hall in Balmoral Park. It will be our 3rd year in the Annex building – behind the Eikon Centre and opposite M&S, so we do hope that we will be easy to find.

Tuesday, 14th May is, of course, Competitions Day in the WI Hall when entries are taken to the Show by exhibitors and staged between 12noon and 4pm, ready for judging. It is also a very busy day for the Balmoral Committee, as produce for the teas and market stall arrive and all must be left ready for the Show to begin the next morning.

The Balmoral Show is an important event in the WI calendar. With up to 110,000 visitors expected from the UK and Ireland it enables us to showcase everything the FWINI has to offer, and it is also our main fundraiser in the year. The 'WI Teas' are enjoyed by both new visitors to the Show and by those who return to our Tearoom each year. Our market stall with homemade jams, chutneys, cakes, breads, fudge, etc. is always busy and sold out by the end of the week!

Ladies, we again ask for your generous help by providing items to sell on the market stall and as many traybakes for the teas as possible! Unfilled butter sandwich cakes (plain, chocolate or coffee) are welcome as these will be filled, decorated, and packaged at the show by some of our talented members! Scones are purchased fresh each morning and any donations towards the cost of these will be gratefully received. Produce may be left at WI Headquarters on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday of Show Week. You can also leave any items with members of the Balmoral Committee or any Executive Member. If you would like to help and are available for 4 hours any Show day, please phone WI HQ.

Fireside quiz sheets have been sent out and ballot tickets are now available – please return any unsold ballot tickets in time for them to be sold at the Show – these could be returned in an envelope via the Executive Member or a Balmoral Committee member, if you wish.

Our sincere thanks to all our sponsors and to the RUAS for all their help and support.

*See you at the Show!*

**Heather Adamson**  
**Balmoral Sub-Committee Chairman**

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## **Homecraft Sub-Committee**

I am pleased to present my 3rd and final Homecraft report for this 3-year period. Firstly, I would like to thank the Sub-Committee members for their help and support over the last 3 years. They have been a great team, working hard and coming up with new ideas to encourage more members to try craft. The new Homecraft awards are introduced, and the new Full Circle is on display on the trophy table.

Unfortunately, crafts submitted for judging are down again this year with only 178 articles received for judging from October to February. Standards remain high with 30A+, 126A, 12B and 10 items returned for more work and 2 not as Syllabus. We held a One Day School at the end of September 2023, when 26 members took part in beading, wool embroidery, and unfinished work.

The Christmas One Day School in November was a great success, with 37 members taking part. Crafts offered were: a Christmas dove, macramé tree ornament, a pin flair bauble, folded Nordic star, Scandi style embroidery, a decorated candle and a glass snowman. Everyone went home with 2 completed Christmas items. The Sub-Committee tutored the One Day School and waived their fee, saving FWINI £656. The sales tables at the 2 events raised £299 for Federation funds.

Regarding the One Day Schools and Homecraft Weekends – it is difficult to organise these if we do not know what crafts you would like to see. All you have to do is send an email to Kathleen with your requests or telephone WI HQ and the requests will be forwarded to the Sub-Committee.

Trophy judging took place on 12th March 2024 and again entries were down. 3 cups will not be presented this year. They are the Eileen McCoubrey Cup for traditional white embroidery, the Peggy Adam's Trophy for white embroidery (including counted thread embroidery) and the Seapark Salver for newly enrolled members.

We had a very good Balmoral Show in 2023 when the Homecraft stall raised £1,864. We hope to do even better this year. Ladies, as usual, we need well crafted, knitted or crocheted toys for Balmoral Show 2024. These should be closely knitted and well stuffed, with no gaps that little fingers can poke out the stuffing! Health and safety regulations mean that we cannot sell toys with button eyes, so please make sure they are embroidered. Farm animals and dinosaurs are popular.

We will also accept fabric toys. Simple crocheted pram blankets are popular too and if you have no-one to give your Isobel Lusk cardigan to, we will try to sell them. We will also accept good quality homemade items for sale. There will be the usual display of crafts, provided this year by the ladies of Lisnagarvy Area. Hope to see you all at Balmoral!

A very successful Homecraft Weekend took place at the Drumalis Retreat & Conference Centre, Larne from 22nd – 24th March 2024, when crafts on offer were: goldwork, boxes, jointed teddies and unfinished. Old and new friends had a great time with good food and great craic.

Finally, my thanks to Kathleen, Caroline and Mary for all their help.

**Brenda Richardson**  
**Homecraft Sub-Committee Chairman**

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## **Home and Garden Sub-Committee**

It gives me great pleasure to present my report for Home and Garden. Easter is early this year and hopefully will bring with it some good weather.

May 2023 saw us back at Balmoral with once again a successful Show. The King's Coronation as a theme proved to be successful as we had quite a few entries. Hopefully, that will continue for this year. The competitions for this year are advertised in the magazine. (The deadline for returning Balmoral Competition entry forms to WI HQ has been extended to: Friday, 19th April 2024.)

Once again, we are depending on the generosity of our fellow members throughout the four days of the Show.

One of our most popular events in the WI Calendar is our Christmas Event, which took place on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Over 400 members attended the event in the Armagh City Hotel.

Our demonstrators on the day were Ruby Ferguson who gave us a lovely floral art demo on looking after winter pots and baskets and how to give them a festive feel. SD Kells then provided us with a fashion show. The models were members of the Home and Garden Sub-Committee, and we even had a gentleman model some of the store's excellent menswear. After lunch, Symphonia Handcrafted Irish Spirits gave us a great demonstration on cocktail making for Christmas. This was a great success.

The Competition was for a decorated traybake in the shape of a Christmas tree and the winner was Carol Cathers of Ballygawley WI. Carol was awarded the Romanian Platter.

Once again, we had our Christmas tree decorated with hats and scarves. These were later donated to St. Vincent De Paul and The Salvation Army. Plans are now underway for this year's event, which will take place on 23rd November 2024 in the Armagh City Hotel. Details will be published in the magazine.

We are delighted to be taking part in City of Belfast Autumn Fair which will take place in Botanic Gardens on Saturday, 14th and Sunday, 15th September 2024. Information about the WI competitions is published in the Spring magazine. We look forward to your support. Our work on raising awareness of Climate Change continues, watch this space for further action on this throughout the year. As you can see, Home and Garden have a busy year ahead.

I would like to thank my Committee for all their hard work and support over this last year and also to Kathleen Caroline and Mary, many thanks.

## **International Sub-Committee**

Ladies, I wish to present my final Annual Report on behalf of the International Sub-Committee for this period. Thanks to everyone that has forwarded money to be sent to ACWW for their 'Rural Women in Action Fund'. The total for the year was £9,433.57. Donations to the fund will support all ACWW's work including projects, advocacy and all of the normal running costs. If you could please ensure that any cheques sent to WI Headquarters for ACWW are made payable to FWINI.

One of the newest Rural Women in Action projects to be announced is a 12-month programme entitled '**Planting the Seeds of Peace**'. The project is to be implemented in a school in Bucharest, Romania which is hosting 200 Ukrainian children. Due to the ongoing conflict, there has been a huge number of families having to flee from their own country. This project is to help some of the children from those families recover from the terrible impact of conflict through the therapeutic practice of gardening. Monthly classes during the school year will be held to help them learn about horticulture. The participants will also attend practical gardening sessions. They will learn about growing plants, soil restoration and climate change. Horticulture has been found to be very therapeutic for those suffering from trauma and anxiety. The project will be implemented by ACWW Member Society the Geopolitical Alliance of Women, and the Association of Ukrainian Romania Teachers.

**A new podcast** has been launched with ACWW hosting alongside UNESCO on the topic of Women's Leadership. Episodes will air monthly. In the first episode, a number of speakers including the World President consider why we must continue to argue for gender equality in leadership. Other topics will include the role of women in peacebuilding, impact of climate change on rural women and women in agriculture. They will be available to listen to on the ACWW website homepage [www.acww.org.uk/podcast](http://www.acww.org.uk/podcast) as well as on the UNESCO website.

**Women Walk the World** is one of the best fundraising opportunities for ACWW and it's always well supported by those in our Federation. All that's required is satisfactory weather and a group of friends! More details are in the Spring magazine. Please remember to forward all your lovely photos to Caroline for her social media posts and for inclusion in the *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine. All sponsorship money should please be returned to WI Headquarters before the end of June. Just a reminder to the organisers of the 'Walks', if you could please ensure that all participants complete the Health Questionnaire available for downloading from our website. This is for insurance purposes just in case of accidents, which hopefully will not occur.

Each year the **Evelyn Lord Trophy** is presented to a WI member, Institute or Area that has shown a great contribution to an international cause or carried out impressive work at an international level. Our Committee unanimously decided that the Evelyn Lord Trophy for 2023 should be awarded to Carnlough WI for their tireless efforts at raising money for ACWW.

The **Mary Boyd Competition for 2023**, was based on the creation of a shoe bag for travelling purposes. First place was awarded to Christine Rankin, Ards Peninsula Area Executive Member, Chair of the Magazine Sub-Committee, Donaghadee WI; followed by Ann Eccleston of Jerretspass WI in second place. All entries were brought to the ACWW Triennial World Conference in Kuala Lumpur. Executive member Christine was one of those receiving a consolation prize consisting of a signed certificate by HM Queen Azizah, along with a beautiful trophy. At the recent World Rural Women's Day event, Christine was presented with her prize by Magdie de Kock, ACWW World President. Thanks again to those who entered the competition and made extra shoe bags to sell. This year's competition is to create a foldable, lined shopping bag, sporting an international theme. All entries should be left at WI Headquarters by 30th August 2024. Further details are available as shown in the most recent edition of the *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine and also on Facebook. Please encourage your Institutes to join in the fun.

Our **Rural Women's Day Event** was held on the morning of 8th October 2023 in my home county of Fermanagh, followed by the Autumn Council Meeting. We were privileged to have Magdie de Kock, ACWW World President in attendance as our guest speaker. Magdie spoke about her childhood in South Africa and the conditions that still exist there today. The presentation was well received by the audience and as time permitted, Magdie was happy to hold a lively question and answer session.

Thank you to everyone that participated and donated during the morning. Almost £300 was raised for ACWW. We are looking forward to our next Rural Women's Day Event in the autumn.

We pass on our gratitude for the ladies that previously served on ACWW Committees - Margaret Broome (Federation Chairman) who served on UN Committee and Pamela Brown who served on Finance and Membership Committee. Our continued thanks to Edwina Marr who is currently an ACWW Trustee and Board Lead on Community Transformation & Projects.

The International Sub-Committee would like to express sincere thanks to the wonderful team of ladies in the office at Federation HQ. We appreciate everything that you do! In addition, my thanks to the fantastic ladies on my International Sub-Committee that have always been so supportive over the last three years. I couldn't have asked for better people to work with.

Finally, to you the members of the Federation, thank you for all your fundraising efforts relating to ACWW.

***"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile"*** – Albert Einstein.

*Wishing you all an enjoyable AGM.*

**Rhoda Farrelly**  
**International Sub-Committee Chairman**

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## **Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee**

The Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee is responsible for the publication of our magazine, the *Ulster Countrywoman*, and the organisation and running of the following sporting events and competitions:

### ***Sporting Events:***

Bowls, Quiz, and Golf.

### ***Competitions:***

Photographic, Literary, Scrapbook, Best Magazine Cover, Best Magazine Article and Best Poem published in the magazine.

The *Ulster Countrywoman* is now published six times a year and the Sub-Committee meet as and when is necessary, both in person and by Zoom from September through to May/June on the first Tuesday of the month.

The main responsibility of this Sub-Committee is to oversee the production of the *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine as an engaging read by providing interesting articles, stories, monthly book reviews, competitions, puzzles, photographs and other news items including those sent in by our WI members.

Caroline Hamilton, our Editor, chooses and edits the items for the finished publication. Articles and photographs received for publication should be of a high standard and WI news items should adhere to word counts where applicable. Caroline works extremely hard in producing and maintaining an excellent standard of the *Ulster Countrywoman*. I am sure you will agree, our magazine is an excellent way of keeping in touch with what our members get up to and important information regarding events and competitions.

The front cover is chosen from photographs sent in by the members, which is also a competition (The Quoile Trophy). The magazine is distributed to members throughout Northern Ireland, various other organisations and also sent by members to friends abroad.

During the 2023-24 season we so far have produced 5 editions of the magazine – September 2023, Autumn 2023, Christmas 2023, New Year 2024 and Spring 2024. The Summer '24 edition (\*deadline for articles/photographs: 30th April!) will be published at the end of May.

The Monthly Competition continues to be well supported and our annual Fireside Quiz sent out in October was greatly enjoyed by the membership. The winners were: 1st place - Pearl McMaster, Ballyclare WI and 2nd place - Caryll Trouton, Tartaraghan WI.

The Phyllis Gailey Literary Competition attracted a good number of entries and was won by Jennifer Gardiner of Kilrea WI for her story interpreting the title '*Just Like Granny Used To Do...*'. This apt title was deliberately left quite open to interpretation, with writers encouraged to let their imagination take flight, and a variety of very different intriguing tales were submitted.

It was very pleasing to have an increase in the number of entries for the Scrapbook Competition. The Open class (Waringstown Cup) was won by Broughshane WI. Spa WI had a hat-trick in winning the Novice, Front Cover and Single Page for their lovely scrapbook.

The Best Magazine Cover competition (Quoile Trophy) was awarded to Heather Freestone of Portglenone WI for her beautiful winter sunrise paddleboarding scene that graced the front cover of the New Year 2023 magazine.

The Best Poem published in the magazine (Mourne Cup) was won by Hazel Campbell of Crumlin WI for her humorous poem entitled '*Sales Fever*' which told the story of 'bagging a bargain' in the sales and also aptly featured in the New Year 2023 magazine. Congratulations to all the winners and runners up in the competitions and to all those who enter the competitions.

***Up and coming events:***

--**The Bowling Competition** will be held on **Saturday, 20th April 2024** in Connor Presbyterian Church Hall, Kells,

--**The Quiz Final** will be held on **Wednesday, 5th June 2024** in Annaghmore Parish Church Hall, Portadown starting 7:30pm - *sharp!* **Teams need to be registered by 7:15pm.**

--**WI Golfer of the Year** will be held at the Riverside Course, Portstewart Gold Club on **Monday, 24th June 2024.**

--**The Photographic Competition** is our last competition of the year. The title '***All in a Row***' should see some very interesting images. Closing date for entries: 15th July 2024. Details of all these events are in the *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine.

It just leaves me to say in this my final report in the current Federation Executive, it has been a very different three years – a pandemic and then gradually getting back to the 'new normal', a very sincere thank you to a hardworking Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee and our Editor for all that they have done behind the scenes over the past three years, taking us to where we are today and thank you, to you the members for your continued support.

**Christine Rankin**  
**Magazine and Leisure Committee Chairman**

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