



THE FEDERATION OF  
WOMEN'S INSTITUTES  
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

## Sub-Committee Reports — ACM October 2025

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### Arts Sub-Committee Report — October 2025

At **Balmoral Show** we had a display of 23 paintings from 5 different artists. It was good to see that 7 of these were from members in the Slemish Area. It would be lovely if we had some more from our artistic members.

The **Festival of the Spoken Word** was held on Saturday, 11th October at Templepatrick which was a very successful day.

There were 69 entries in the 6 classes. It was good to see that entries were up. We had a reasonably good audience, but I would encourage more to come as it is an enjoyable day and also nice for contestants to have a good audience of supporters.

The Adjudicator Arthur Webb was very pleased with the quality of the entries and commented on the talent within the WI. He also commented how much he enjoyed the day.

**The Annual Arts Competition and Arts Festival Coffee Morning** will be held on 13th February 2026 in WI Headquarters from 10am to 12 noon where all artwork will be on display.

The theme for the Painting Competition is: '**AUTUMN**'.

The 3D Decoupage is 'Open' to any theme and details of the Handwriting and Calligraphy are published in the Autumn edition of the magazine.

**The Drama Festival** will be on 7th March 2026 and the **Music Festival** will be held on 18th April 2026, both at Templepatrick. Further details will be published in upcoming magazines.

**Margaret McCracken — Arts Sub-Committee Chair**

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## **Balmoral Sub-Committee Report — October 2025**

When we met last autumn to plan for the Balmoral Show in May, the Committee agreed that the Tearoom should be updated and made more visible to visitors. Thanks to everyone's hard work and dedication the result was a great success.

The self-service setup was very effective and allowing visitors to choose their own food meant that we had no wastage. The half wall also helped to improve visibility and enhance the overall presentation.

On behalf of the Balmoral Sub-Committee, I would extend my sincere thanks to all our members for the support provided throughout the Show, both in providing assistance during the busy four days and providing all the wonderful traybakes.

Thanks also to the other Sub-Committees who delivered impressive and vibrant displays in their respective areas, helping to make our space welcoming, colourful and engaging for visitors.

We have already received a great deal of very positive feedback on our new arrangements and would welcome any further suggestions for improvement as we plan for our next Show.

Thank you once again for your commitment and teamwork – your efforts truly made the event a success.

***Janette Graham* — Balmoral Sub-Committee Chair**

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## **Homecraft Sub-Committee Report — October 2025**

Since the AGM in March, the Homecraft Sub-Committee has been busy.

In May, we had a successful Balmoral Show. Your knitted and crocheted toys, along with other handmade items on our stall, flew out of their baskets. Please continue to knit farm animals, dinosaurs and other small toys for next year's Show. The Committee will be making some items to sell as well. This year's competition entries were wonderful and of a very high standard. All the scarecrows were very eye-catching.

On Saturday, 13th and Sunday, 14th September, we put on a display of handicrafts at the City of Belfast Autumn Fair Flower Show in Botanic Gardens – and are pleased to have been awarded the BCC Rosette for Society Display of the Show for the second year running! The Institute/Area table entries for the WI Competition '*No Time to Waste*' were all of a high standard and really showcased the talents of our members.

On Saturday, 20th September, twenty ladies attended a One Day School at WI Headquarters. Classes were Italian Quilting, Cathedral Window Patchwork, Sewing Machine Project and Unfinished. A productive and enjoyable day was had by all.

Following our successful debut at last year's Knitting and Stitching Show we are taking a stand again this year. The show runs from 13th - 16th November in the Eikon Centre. See your WI magazine for details – and an exclusive discount code!

Homecraft are running a Christmas Craft Day workshop at WI Headquarters on Saturday, 29th November. This is suitable for both beginners and seasoned crafters. We hope to see you there for crafty fun and friendship. Full details will be published in the Autumn *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine.

Please support our workshops at WI Headquarters. They are reasonably priced compared to equivalent private events. If you are organising a One Day School in your Area, the Homecraft Committee can help you with classes. Suggestions for future classes are always welcome.

Running all these events wouldn't be possible without the help of my Committee and of course Kathleen.

**Elizabeth McKinty — Homecraft Sub-Committee Chair**

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### **Home and Garden Sub-Committee Report — October 2025**

It's hard to believe how quickly this year has flown by! We've all been enjoying the beautiful autumn days, and Home and Garden has certainly had another busy and rewarding year.

Back in May, we had great success with the Balmoral Show Competitions. Entries were steady, the standard was fantastic, and it was wonderful to see so many members taking part and showing their support. We're already chatting about ideas for the 2026 Competitions — it's never too early to get planning!

Looking ahead, our next big occasion will be the **Christmas Event** at the **Armagh City Hotel on Saturday, 22nd November 2025**. I'm really looking forward to seeing many of you there. There'll be plenty of stalls to kick-start your Christmas shopping, and a brilliant line-up of demos — including a **Fashion Show**, **Floral Art** showcase, and a **Loughgall Honey demonstration** — all guaranteed to get us in the festive spirit! This year's competition for the Romanian Platter will be to **create a handmade Christmas card**, so get those creative ideas flowing.

Climate change continues to be an important focus for us; we're exploring how we can make small changes every day. An article in our September magazine focuses on this – well worth a read!

In September, the **City of Belfast Autumn Fair Flower Show** was another highlight. It was lovely to see so many Institutes and Areas taking part in the WI competition, '**No Time to Waste.**' Congratulations to **Drumbeg WI** on being the overall winner — a fantastic achievement!

Finally, a huge thank-you to my wonderful Committee and to **Kathleen, Caroline, and Emma-Jane** in the office for all their help and support throughout the year.

**Teresa Feeney — Home and Garden Sub-Committee Chair**

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## **International Sub-Committee Report — October 2025**

The International Sub-Committee have had a very busy 6 months.

In May we attended Balmoral Show and met and greeted WI members and the public at our International Stand over 4 days; during this time we asked anyone who was interested in attending the European ACWW Conference to sign up so we could make contact with them in the run up to the Conference in October. We had 2 new members who decided to join us on the Conference.

Our chosen charity this year was Flourish who had requested donations of toiletries to help support their guests. The toiletries were for men, women and children who had been victims of Human Trafficking and Jill from Flourish happily accepted our donations. The presentation took place on 7th October at Federation House and Jill advised us that there were 200 men and women and 73 children being cared for at that time. She also advised us that their supplies had become very low, and our donations would be used right away. 18<sup>th</sup> October marked Anti-Slavery Day and a number of public awareness campaigns have taken place across Northern Ireland.

14 members (including 2 new attendees) of the Northern Ireland Women's Institute attended a very successful European ACWW Conference in Bucharest. The Conference focused on the ACWW themes, and we were given updates on the work of ACWW.

Rural Women's Day took place while we were at Conference on 15th October 2025 and we were given the opportunity to update the other European members on the work of WI linking this to ACWW themes. Chairperson Ruth Carroll was also interviewed by Romanian Television in relation to women in Agriculture in Northern Ireland.

The winner of our Mary Boyd Competition (Patricia Kennedy of Waringstown WI) was also the winner of the European Competition – with her beautiful Carrickmacross bookmark.

The European ACWW Conference which will be held in March/April 2028 will take place in Iceland.

***Ruth Carroll* — International Sub-Committee Chair**

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## Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee Report — October 2025

Since the AGM in March 2025, 3 magazines have been produced – Spring, Summer and the latest edition, September 2025 which you will all have received. The Autumn edition will be available next Thursday and the Christmas edition at the end of November. Invoices for the year will accompany the Autumn edition.

Members are always encouraged to submit interesting and unique articles, not necessarily all WI related, along with photographs, including those for the front cover. To assist the Editor, we would be grateful if you could send in your content well in advance of the deadlines, **keep to the word count** and no blurry photographs – these cannot be used.

News and photographs that do not make it into the magazine may appear on the FWINI Facebook page, on Instagram or on the website.

The Bowling and Quiz Finals were well attended with both venues providing excellent facilities. The Golfer of the Year competition took place at Green Acres Golf Centre, Ballyclare on a beautiful day in June. This was a most enjoyable day for all concerned. The Photography Competition was well supported and the array of different photographs for the subject theme captured the judge's imagination. The planning for 2026 Bowls, Quiz and Golf Competitions are well under way – dates and venues to be confirmed.

The **Phyllis Gailey Literary Competition 'If Only I Knew...'** is an opportunity to write an exciting story relating to this phrase – closing dates for this competition and the **Scrapbook Competition** are the end of January 2026. The **Photographic Competition** title '**The Colour Red**' should produce many interesting images as you are out and about – closing date in July 2026 to be confirmed. I would ask competitors for the photographic competition to refer to the article on photography in last year's Autumn edition of the magazine for guidance.

We extend our congratulations to the winners of our competitions, the runners up and to all those who enter. Details of these competitions, closing dates and winners are published in the *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine and on the WI Facebook page and WINI website.

The Fireside Quiz will be delivered with the Autumn magazine at still only a £1.00 – no price increases here. It's a fun way to pass an autumn evening. All Institutes will receive 10 sheets and I would encourage you to sell these 10 sheets either to your WI members or friends and family – everyone loves a quiz! Your support helps keep the running costs of our events to a minimum.

We are in the initial process of designing a new tea towel for the Federation. This should be available in the Spring of 2026. It is being designed in mind for our members, visitors to Northern Ireland, and would make a very nice gift and general sale.

The *Ulster Countrywoman* is the magazine of the Federation of the WI of Northern Ireland and as such is the showcase of what we do. The magazine is not only enjoyed by its members but also sent to family and friends abroad as well as the businesses and organisations who advertise with it. An excellent read keeping the WI 'connected'.

**Christine Rankin — Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee Chair**

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