



Coventry and Warwickshire Humanists Newsletter September 2024

Dear Fellow Humanists

I hope that you have all enjoyed a pleasant summer. I have recently returned from the West coast of the USA where we had constant sunshine and temperatures in some areas above 40 degrees Celsius. So, it was a bit of a shock to return to constant rain and temperatures of less than 18 degrees Celsius. The September Equinox was on Sunday 22nd September – the moment when the sun shines directly on the Earth's equator and lights up the Northern and Southern Hemisphere's equally. Twelve- hour days and nights until the clocks go back on 27th October. Winter is definitely on the way.

I hope that you will take a look at the range of speakers we have for our forthcoming meetings. I believe we will have some very interesting meetings over the next few months. It is apparent that we are concerned about the lack of attendance at some of our meetings. I would like to encourage everyone to attend these forthcoming interesting meetings and also to bring a friend whether they are Humanist or not. As Humanists, we do not often get the opportunities to discuss and share our opinions on important issues in the world and how it affects us as Humanists. It is important for us to attempt to apply a Humanist perspective upon these issues.

I hope that we will see you all at future meetings

Brian Goredema-Braid

Chair of Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists

Important News:

As was mentioned in the August Newsletter, we heard of the sad news of the loss of Maureen Nichol who passed away on Saturday 10th August 2024 aged 94 years. Maureen's funeral was held at Charter Chapel, Canley, Coventry, on Tuesday 27th August 2024. There is more about Maureen and her obituary from The Guardian later in this Newsletter.

We were also saddened to learn that Susette Garrett, one of our regular attenders, had a massive stroke a couple of weeks ago and, at the age of 93 and is not expected to leave hospital.

We also heard that Audrey Raishbrook has also recently been in hospital. Hopefully, it is only for a temporary stay and she should be back amongst us very soon.

We will endeavour to keep you all informed of any further information about Susette and Audrey.

Meetings:

Annual General Meeting Thursday 19th September: I believe that Jane Sault has sent out the minutes of the AGM. The meeting included annual reports from the Chairperson, Treasurers Report and a report from the Social Secretary. The election of officers returned the following positions:

Chairperson: Brian Goredema-Braid

Secretary: Jane Sault

Treasurer: Adrian Davis
Social Secretary: Andrew Ireland
Executive Members: John Gainer, John Goodfellow

Hopefully, the Officers and Executive Committee Members will continue to serve Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists for 2024 – 2025

Autumn Social Saturday 21st September: This social event was held at the excellent facilities of Kenilworth Cricket Club. This was a very enjoyable social event with the opportunity for a friendly chat. The catering food was excellent. There were 2 picture quiz's and a quiz on the arts including literature, music, theatre and film. An enjoyable event all round

Future Meetings:

Thursday 17th October: Our main speaker for this event will be Madeleine Goodall the Humanist Heritage Co-ordinator for Humanists UK. I can guarantee that this will be a very interesting meeting. Madeleine has been researching and writing about the history of humanism to celebrate the organisations 125th birthday. Madeleine has a background in education, museums and community history. She currently leads on a two-year National Lottery Heritage Project – humanist Heritage: doers, dreamers, place makers – which focuses on the remarkable freethinkers and activists who changed the world, and the communities they built around themselves. I am hoping that Madeleine will give us some inspiration to delve into the history of Humanists and freethinkers in Coventry and Warwickshire? With regards to me comments in the introduction, we are going to invite more people along to this meeting. Please don't hesitate to bring a friend to this interesting meeting.

Thursday 21st November: We are very pleased to confirm that our main speaker will be Terri O'Sullivan who is the Apostate Services Development Officer for Faith to Faithless, a service of Humanists UK. This promises to be a fascinating meeting. Terri runs a peer support group and co-ordinates social events for the ex-religious all over the UK. In 2007, she founded XJW Friends, a support and social group for former Jehovah's Witnesses. Again, a very interesting topic, especially for anyone who has left or is considering leaving a religion.

I would like to draw your attention to one matter in particular - **our need to boost membership numbers**. Madeline Goodall and Terri O'Sullivan are excellent speakers and deserve to attract a wider audience than our usual attendance.

It would be great to see more of our members attending and if possible to bring a friend or three with you. We will also do some publicity for members of the public to come. It's only a month away so please put it in your diary and let your thought for the week be 'Who has always asked me 'What is Humanism?' and then invite them! (If they need an extra incentive, mention that chocolate biscuits are on offer in the refreshment interval!)

Thursday 19th December: Our annual Yuletide Social which will probably be at the Waverley Centre. Again, more about this in future Newsletters.

Remembrance Sunday Wreaths:

Remembrance Sunday is on 10th November. As many of you know, we request Humanists to volunteer to place a wreath at their local Memorial Statue or Monument in the various towns and districts in Coventry and Warwickshire. Like last year, we are suggesting that members contact their local British Legion office to request a wreath. We will discuss this issue and the arrangements for laying wreaths at the AGM on Thursday 17th October.

Subscriptions:

One of the items discussed in the regular meeting after the AGM was the membership fee for the group. Membership of Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists runs from the 1st September to 31st August every year. We are asking for an annual subscription of £15 per person – but £20 if you can afford it. If you feel able to contribute more, then any additional donations would be welcome. (We

like to make donations to the Uganda Schools as well as individual ones.) If you can arrange a standing order to our bank account that would be great, otherwise a cheque made out to Coventry and Warwickshire Humanists can be sent to our Treasurer Adrian Davis. Or if you are going to be at the meeting on Thursday 17th October, you can give Adrian a cheque or cash.

The bank details are:

Account: Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists
Account Number: 00982911
Sort Code 20-23-55

If you want to send me a cheque, my address is:

Adrian Davis
Flat 14 Ladbroke Hall
Ladbroke
Southam
Warwickshire
CV47 2DF

Maureen Nicol Obituary:

As mentioned earlier and in the August Newsletter, we were saddened to hear of the death of Maureen Nicol, the wife of Brian Nicol the former Chairperson of Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists. We were very pleased to reproduce this excellent Obituary for Maureen Nicol that appeared in The Guardian on Tuesday 3rd September 2024. I have also included a letter from Ruth Jennings that was printed on 8th September after the Obituary.

Maureen Nicol Obituary - The Guardian on Tuesday 3rd September 2024

Founder of the National Women's Register set up to help women deal with the 'voluntary exile' of being stuck at home

Yvonne Roberts

Maureen Nicol, who has died aged 94, was the founder of what became the ground-breaking ***National Women's Register***.

She was a young stay-at-home mother with two children aged under five when she and her husband, Brian, moved to a large Cheshire housing estate, provided by Brian's employer, the Atomic Energy Authority.

There was sparse public transport, and Maureen had little money and few friends when, in February 1960, she read an article in the Guardian by Betty Jerman, entitled Squeezed in Like Sardines in Suburbia, commissioned by Mary Stott, the then women's editor.

"The article was describing exactly how I felt," Maureen explained later. For the first time in her life she wrote a letter to the paper, beginning a long relationship with the Guardian, Jerman and Stott. Maureen suggested that those in "voluntary exile", "housebound wives with liberal interests and a desire to remain individuals" who were missing the stimulation of work and human adult contact – "kindred spirits in the deserts of the suburbs" – might set up a national register to meet local, like-minded women.

Within a week, Maureen had received more than 400 letters. Many expressed relief that they were not alone, that others were also experiencing loneliness and acute mental deprivation, missing their jobs as teachers, nurses, doctors, air hostesses, engineers and secretaries, among other professions. They all also assumed that it was Maureen who would be organising the register.

"I'm not a publicist and I'm not an organiser," Maureen explained. Nonetheless, she borrowed a typewriter, and later an ancient duplicator loaned by the local Labour party. A month after her first letter to the Guardian, the paper published a second letter, in which Maureen asked women to write to her, at her home in Eastham, Cheshire, if they were interested in the Register.

She was inundated with replies, and was soon forced to charge an annual subscription fee of a shilling a year, to cover postal costs.

She also quickly recruited several volunteers who would take on the organisation of different parts of the country, and the Housebound Wives' Register was born. From 1966 it was the National Housewives' Register, and from 1987 the National Women's Register. In its first year, in 1960, it

attracted over 1,600 members, who would meet locally in each other's homes for discussion. Now there are 5,000 members in more than 300 groups.

Several years before the feminist Betty Friedan mused about why American college-educated women were bored as dutiful wives and mothers suffering "the problem that has no name", in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Maureen had discovered the existence of an army of wives who had conformed to the 1950s expectation they would give up work once they became mothers, but who were also strongly resistant to surrendering their brains to domesticity.

"We loved our children, of course, but there was a whole world out there," Maureen told one interviewer.

Much to her surprise, the media interest was intense, reporters always on her door step in an era with fewer telephones and no internet, and the response was not always positive. One reporter asked her if the existence of the Register "would lead to the break-up of the home".

The NWR's tenets have remained unchanged since the beginning. Groups are open to all. No domestic chat, no culinary competitiveness in each other's homes; only coffee, tea and biscuits served, no campaigning, plenty of group activities, discussion, friendship and debate.

"Nowadays, people have views but they don't listen to each other," Maureen, who described herself as "left of centre", said in an interview, aged 90, for the NWR's 60th anniversary. "Left-wing, right-wing ... you listen and appreciate the other person's point of view."



Maureen Nicol during a radio interview

At its peak, in the 80s, NWR had 24,000 members spread over four continents. Although women were no longer expected to give up work on marriage, then as now, the pressure of jobs, family life and little free time, and divorce, retirement or a change of location means that many still seek the friendship and stimulation that an NWR group can provide.

Born in London, Maureen was the daughter of Alice (nee Simpson) and Arthur Johnson, who together ran a corner shop. She spent most of her early life in Dartford, Kent. She was evacuated to the north of England during the second world war and rescued by her mother after complaining that the childless couple with whom she was billeted worked her hard and fed her little.

She is survived by Brian, Simon and Sally, and two grandchildren.

Maureen Nicol, organiser and charity founder, born 21 December 1929; died 10 August 2024

Letter: Maureen Nicol obituary

Ruth Jennings

Sun 8 Sep 2024 16.12 BST

Share

Maureen Nicol and I were good friends for 50 years. This was odd because apart from our sense of humour we had virtually nothing in common. Maureen was fearless, optimistic, decisive ... and a Guardian reader, and I am none of these things. She also thought, unlike me, and to be fair most other people, that if she saw a problem, she personally should try to solve it.

As well as the National Women's Register, she and her husband helped initiate the Kenilworth Footpath Preservation Group, two projects that have made life better for so many people. If there were more people like her who thought that they could do some good, and did, the world would be a better place.



Maureen Nicol at her OBE Investiture

Photograph: NWR

Dartford schools were closed, so Maureen missed two years of education. In later life, she took a number of courses, including an A-level in English literature in her 50s. She also worked as a volunteer for the Citizens Advice Bureau for almost a decade, gaining a certificate in family law.

Leaving school at 16, Maureen went to technical college to acquire secretarial qualifications. She eventually worked for several years at the London theatrical costumiers Nathans, a job she loved. She also became a lifelong theatregoer. In 1952, in a pink wedding dress, she married Brian Nicol. Over the years, as he took on increasingly senior positions in education, the family moved several times both in the UK, and to Uganda and Hong Kong. In most places, Maureen would join the local group of the National Women's Register.

She had handed on the role of national organiser in 1962, and become – along with Stott and Jerman – a trustee of the organisation.

In 1995, Maureen was appointed OBE for her services to women. Her diary of the day of the investiture records that she was not impressed by the Queen, who was in “a plain silk dress without ornamentation and looked strained. She knew nothing about the NWR.”

Maureen was self-effacing and disliked public speaking. When raising her hand at the NWR's AGM, she would give her name and group location like any other member. Her son, Simon, said that his mother was always “super keen” that he and his sister, Sally, achieved well in education: “We do wonder what she might have done if she had had greater opportunities.” As it is, Maureen was, in the words of Jerman, “an extraordinary woman who recognised a universal need and acted upon it”. She is survived by Brian, Simon and Sally, and two grandchildren.

Maureen Nicol, organiser and charity founder, born 21 December 1929; died 10 August 2024 (Maureen Nicol's obituary was also mentioned on the BBC Radio 4 programme 'Last Word' on Friday 13th September. The programme is still available on BBC 1-Player)

Overconsumption: will it be the death of us? By Maggie Hall

(Reproduced from Humanistically Speaking)

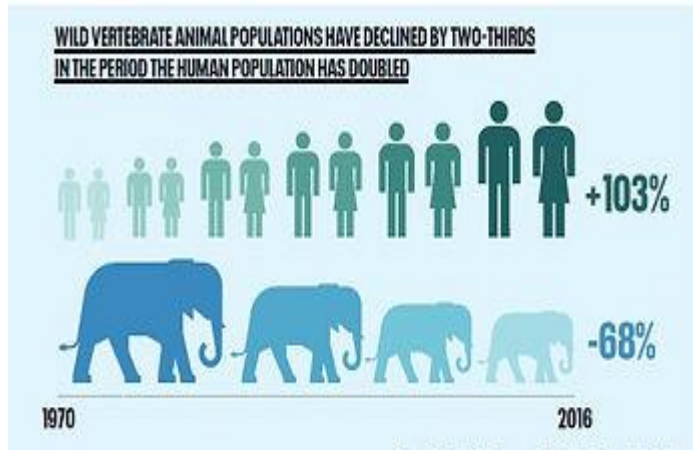


Maggie Hall

Maggie is a former Chair of Brighton Humanists, a member of the Humanists UK Dialogue Network, and a Humanists UK School Speaker. She is also a retired teacher of speech and drama. In this article, Maggie looks at the way human beings are consuming themselves out of existence and what some people are trying to do about it.

There is no doubt that the current level of human activity on our planet is having disastrous consequences. The overconsumption of resources is destroying, at an alarming rate, the only home we have and we are drowning in our own excess.

Biodiversity loss



Animal populations decline while human populations increase. Image: Population Matters
10,000 years ago, 99% of the mass of vertebrate animals consisted of wild animals, while only 1% was human. Today, only 1% of the mass of vertebrate animals consists of wild animals, while humans account for 32% and livestock for 67%. Habitat destruction and species extinction are harmful to human beings as well as wildlife.

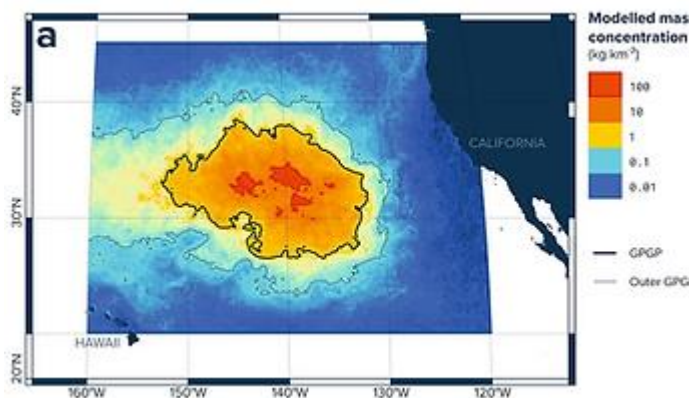
70% of all cancer drugs today are natural or bio-inspired products. And scientists are still discovering new species each year, including a fungus found in the Amazon rainforest that can eat plastic.

Resource depletion

We would need 1.75 Earths to maintain our current level of consumption into the future. While humanity is currently managing to produce enough food for eight billion people, our annual rate of consumption far exceeds the planet's ability to regenerate critical resources such as water and sustainably produce building materials such as timber. If people in every country lived like United States citizens, then humanity would need five Earths' worth of resources every year, according to the Global Footprint Network, a non-profit environmental organisation which each year calculates 'Earth Overshoot Day'. This is an extract from the organisation's website: 'Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity has exhausted nature's budget for the year. For the rest of the year, we are maintaining our ecological deficit by drawing down local resource stocks and accumulating carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.' In 2024, Earth Overshoot Day falls on 1st August.

Pollution

Pollution from human activity is widespread and takes many forms. Plastic pollution has become a big global issue. Air pollution is caused by car exhaust fumes and the burning of fossil fuels.



Great Pacific Garbage Patch in August 2015 (model)
(Wikipedia Commons)

Soil and waterways are polluted by domestic and industrial waste, sewage, pesticides, extraction mining, herbicides, and animal waste run-off from agriculture and livestock farming. This pollution affects not only local areas but also spreads to remote places. Pesticides and other chemicals have been found in the Antarctic Ice Sheet and there is an enormous collection of microscopic plastic particles known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch floating around in the middle of the northern Pacific Ocean.

Estimates of its size vary, but the most widely accepted figure is about 1.6 million square kilometres, which is roughly twice the size of Texas or three times the size of France.

The climate crisis

By far the most worrying effect of all this human activity is the alarmingly rapid rate at which global temperatures are rising. According to the latest IPCC report:

- concentrations of carbon dioxide today are unmatched for at least two million years
- glacial retreat is unmatched for 2,000+ years

- the last decade was warmer than any period for approximately 125,000 years
- sea level has risen faster than in any previous century for 3,000 years
- summer Arctic ice coverage is smaller than at any time in the last 1,000 years
- ocean warming is happening faster than at any time since the end of the last ice age
- ocean acidification is at the highest level of the last 26,000 years

(Source: IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), specifically the report from Working Group I.) The cause of all these environmental crises is painfully obvious. There are just too many of us – 8.1 billion, according to the most recent UN figures – and most of us, at least in the global north, are consuming far too much far too quickly, and a main driver of consumerism is advertising.

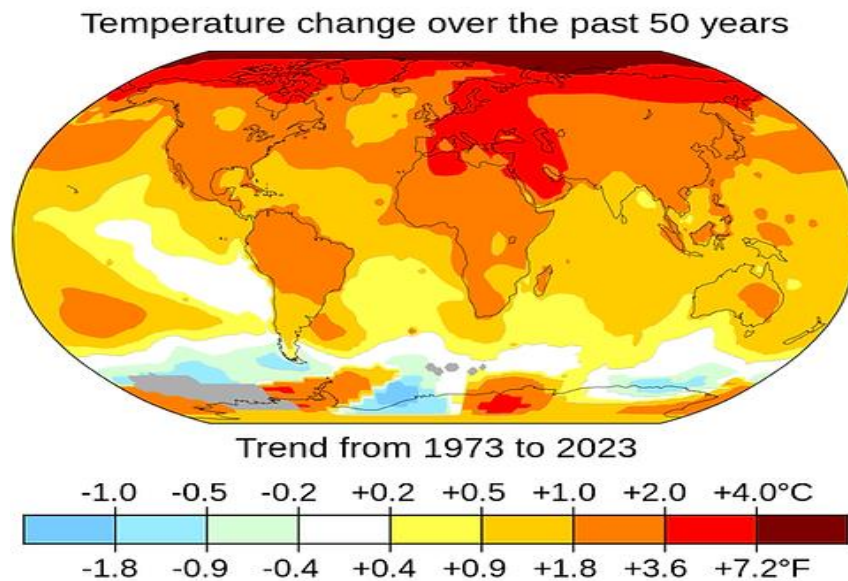


Image by NASA's Scientific Visualization Studio, Key and Title by uploader (Eric Fisk) - Wikipedia Creative Commons license (linked to source).

Black Friday

Black Friday began in the US and quickly spread to the UK. On this day, many stores slash prices for exclusive deals, making it one of the busiest shopping days of the year. This surge in shopping significantly impacts the environment in numerous ways. One major issue is that many of the items sold are of low quality and are soon discarded. A recent report by the University of Leeds found that up to 80% of items – and any plastic packaging they are wrapped in – will end up either in landfill, incineration or, at best, low quality recycling, often after a very short life. Consumers are also encouraged to upgrade their mobile phones unnecessarily, leading to ever more extraction of the rare metals used in their manufacture, not to mention the 121.5 million tonnes of CO₂-equivalent produced by their manufacture in a single year. (This figure includes an allowance for all greenhouse gas emissions.)

Delivery of on-line purchases has its own impact. It's estimated that 7.2 million delivery vehicles will be on the road by 2030, resulting in an increase of six million tonnes of CO₂ emissions. The amount of packaging involved in online shopping is also colossal, contributing significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions.

Food waste

When surplus food is dumped in landfill sites it contributes significantly to the climate crisis. As it rots it produces methane gas, the most potent of all greenhouse gases. According to WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), the UK generates about 9.5 million tonnes of food waste annually. Of this total, about 70% (6.6 million tonnes) comes from households. Wasting food also wastes the huge amount of water that went into producing it. 70% of the world's accessible fresh water is used in agriculture. It takes 100 buckets of water to produce one loaf of bread and 54 buckets to rear one chicken breast. According to the World Resources Institute, about 24% of the

water used for agriculture is ultimately wasted because it goes toward producing food that is never consumed.

But now the good news

As is often the case, while governments often tackle problems at a glacial pace, at grass roots level people are doing it for themselves. To try to reduce levels of agricultural pollution and biodiversity loss they are going organic, growing their own food and reducing their consumption of meat, often opting for a totally plant-based diet instead. Research released by the personal finance comparison site Finder estimates that the UK's vegan population has risen by 1.1 million in a single year. To reduce food waste, people are organising community larders and community fridges to use up



A bumper crop of supermarket surplus food at Seaford community larder.

supermarket surpluses that would otherwise go to waste and buying 'wonky' fruit and vegetables that the supermarkets won't buy from producers, sourcing them from farmer's markets and other outlets like Odd Box. To reduce the environmental harm caused by consumerism they are donating to and buying from charity shops instead of buying new items, running 'reuse' shops, upcycling and recycling, often using reuse platforms such as Freecycle or Freegle, where unwanted items are offered free of charge to anyone who can make use of them. To make broken items reusable they are running repair cafes and projects like 'men's sheds' and community workshops.

To reduce the amount of plastic items in use in the home they are buying non-plastic alternatives from eco-friendly producers, such as bamboo toothbrushes, biodegradable rubbish bags, scourers made from copper, jute and other natural materials. They are also using paper products like tissues and toilet paper made from alternative materials such as bamboo, hemp, or recycled paper, which are more sustainable than slow-growing wood. To reduce the amount of harmful chemicals in the environment they are using natural cleaning and laundry products such as vinegar, bicarbonate of soda, soda crystals, oxygen bleach, soap nuts, lemon juice and citric acid. They are also forming local environmental groups and networks to share ideas and information and to put pressure on local councils and businesses to adopt more sustainable working practices, plant more trees that can sequester CO₂ and make public spaces available for community gardens which can be used to grow food for local people.

The number of ways in which ordinary people in their own communities can drive change is huge. I have only mentioned a few of them. I leave the last word to one of the most revered names in humanism: 'It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.' Charles Darwin

References and further reading

- United Nations data on population
- 'Harvesting the Biosphere: The Human Impact', Population and Development Review
- Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
- Global Footprint Network
- Information on "Black Friday"
- Article on the sustainability of refurbished mobile phones
- The Vegan Society
- Community fridges and larders
- Oddbox (sellers of "wonky" fruit and veg)

- Our world in data (CO2 emissions)
- Freegle (re-use website)
- Freecycle (re-use website)
- Men's sheds
- Repair Cafes
- Brighton Community Workshop

Eco-friendly online shops

Natural Collection

Peace with the Wild

The Hive (an ethical alternative to Amazon for books, CDs, etc. Orders can be sent to your local independent bookshop for pickup.)

Film Preview: Some excellent films at Warwick Arts Centre (WAC) and Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

The Critic: The year is 1936. A scintillating tale of ambition and deceit in the theatre world. The editor of London's Chronicle, seeks to revive the financially troubled daily. In the firing line is the long-time theatre critic, whose extravagant prose and personal "proclivities" appear distasteful. As an elderly gay man, the Critic has a lot to lose in a culture and legal system deeply hostile to homosexuality. An actress is a regular target for the Critic's most withering remarks. As pressure to appease his employer mounts, the Critic concocts a plot to entrap both editor and actor — but he may be grossly overestimating his ability to emerge from his elaborate scheme unscathed. Starring Ian McKellen, Gemma Arteton and Mark Strong. At most cinemas

Lee: Oscar winner Kate Winslet stars in this fascinating portrait of the great American war correspondent Lee Miller, whose singular talent gave us some of the 20th century's most indelible images. Determined to document the truth of the Nazi regime, and in spite of the odds stacked against female correspondents, Lee captured some of the most important images of World War II, for which she paid an enormous personal price. Mainly at WAC and MAC – some cinemas

The Substance: Demi Moore portrays a fading Hollywood star feuding with the manifestation of her younger self in this award-winning body-horror satire. Desperate to secure her fading celebrity status, a Hollywood actress undergoes a black-market medical procedure that promises self-actualization, but culminates in the spawning of "Sue" a bold and brash clone of her younger self that perpetuates its existence via weekly spinal taps. At most cinemas including WAC & MAC

Kneecap: A 2024 comedy-drama film depicting the rise of Belfast-based hip-hop trio, Kneecap. The film stars the band members as themselves, with Josie Walker, Fionnuala Flaherty, Jessica Reynolds, Adam Best, Simone Kirby, and Michael Fassbender in supporting roles.

The Outrun: When 30-year-old woman's alcoholism causes the dissolution of her long-term relationship and derails her promising career in biology, she leaves her ragged London life to dry out where she grew up, in Orkney. On her father's farm, she begins to inch towards inner peace and sobriety, while tackling some hard truths about his bipolarity and why her mother left for the mainland. An excellent performance from Saoirse Ronan. Mainly at WAC & MAC

Megalopolis: Francis Ford Coppola's ambitious self-funded film offers the sights and sounds of a Roman epic set in an imagined modern America. The City of New Rome must change, causing conflict between Cesar Catilina, (Adam Driver), a genius artist who seeks to leap into a utopian future, and his opposition Mayor Franklyn Cicero (Giancarlo Esposito), who remains committed to a regressive status quo, perpetuating greed, special interests, and partisan warfare.

The Queen of My Dreams: A Canadian-Pakistani comedy-drama film, written and directed by Fawzia Mirza in her feature directorial debut. The film stars Amrit Kaur as Azra, a Pakistani Canadian woman who has had a strained relationship with her parents since coming out as lesbian, who undergoes an emotional journey after the sudden unexpected death of her father Hassan (Hamza Haq).

Joker: An American musical psychological thriller film. It is the sequel to Joker (2019), loosely based on DC Comics characters, and stars Joaquin Phoenix reprising his role as the Joker with Lady

Gaga joining the cast as his love interest. Zazie Beetz, Brendan Gleeson and Catherine Keener also join the cast. At most cinemas

My Old Ass: A 2024 American comedy-drama film. A woman who has been advised by her future self not to fall in love, is sure she can follow the advice she has been given. That is, until she meets the boy her older self warned her about. Starring Maisy Stella in her film debut, Percy Hynes White, Maddie Ziegler, Kerrice Brooks, and Aubrey Plaza. Mainly at WAC & MAC

The Godman Case: A tense, edge-of-the-seat courtroom drama powerfully recreating the trial of Pierre Goldman in 1976 France, widely acknowledged as the most divisive case since the Dreyfus Affair of 1894. Prosecuted for a triple murder during the armed robbery of a Parisian pharmacy, Goldman, the rebellious son of Polish-Jewish immigrants, whose father was also a decorated Resistance fighter, refused to call any witnesses to his character. Politically on the far left and defiantly Jewish in his identity, Goldman accused the police of institutional antisemitism and racism, and of conspiring to convict him of a crime of which he was innocent.

A Different Man: In New York an aspiring actor undergoes a radical medical procedure to drastically transform his appearance. But his new dream face becomes a nightmare as he loses out on the role he was born to play and becomes obsessed with reclaiming what was lost/. Starring Sebastian Stan and Adam Pearson. Mainly at WAC & MAC

Strange Dealing: A horror thriller cat-and-mouse genre on a twisted one-night stand that spirals into a serial killer's murder spree. A tense, ingenious take on gender politics that defies expectation at every turn. Mainly at WAC & MAC

The Battle for Laikipia: In the Laikipia region of Kenya, it hasn't rained for 18 months. The desperate situation engenders bad feeling between indigenous herders and white landowners who stayed in Kenya after independence. As an election approaches, the situation escalates leading to violence against animals, herders and landowners. This complex film interrogates the complicated legacy of British colonialism and climate change. Mainly at WAC & MAC

In Camera: A British Asian comedy. A struggling actor in his 20's, is caught in a cycle of nightmarish auditions and demoralising gigs. He shares his flat with a junior doctor suffering from burnout. They gain a new flatmate, a suave fashion influencer and stylist who's positively brimming with self-confidence. He decides to create a new role for himself based on his new flatmate.

Blitz: In the face of nightly air raids, an East End mum grows increasingly worried about her son George's safety. Under the counsel of her father, she makes the heart-wrenching decision to send him to the countryside. But a few hours into his journey, George alights the train, determined to return to Stepney Green and his family. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Paul Weller

The Teacher: A Palestinian school teacher struggles to reconcile his life-threatening commitment to political resistance with his emotional support for one of his students. Simultaneously, an American couple seek the return of their son who has been held hostage for three years.

Starve Acre: In 1970s Yorkshire, a couple relocate to their childhood home of Starve Acre, hoping the idyllic country surroundings will benefit their young son. However, a sudden and tragic event drives a wedge through the family, which triggers the husband to bury himself in obsessively exploring a local folkloric myth. Mainly at WAC & MAC

Still on the Circuit:

Deadpool and Wolverine: Wolverine is recovering from his injuries when he crosses paths with the loudmouth Deadpool. They team up to defeat a common enemy. Starring Shawn Levy and Ryan Reynolds – You know what you are going to get!

Firebrand: In the final months of King Henry VIII's reign, his sixth wife, Katherine Parr navigates the treacherous waters of the Tudor court. Her progressive beliefs and courage put her at odds with the ailing and increasingly paranoid monarch. Appointed as Regent during his absence, her newfound

power threatens the courtiers who scheme against her, casting doubt on her fidelity to the King. Starring Jude Law and Alicia Vikander. Still at some cinemas?

Shakespeare's Globe Presents Othello: Live screening from The Globe. 16th century Venice becomes modern-day London's Docklands, as Othello grapples with many of the same issues that successful Black people have faced for centuries. Othello (Ken Nwosu) has risen through the ranks of the Met police. But can his hard-won reputation, his marriage to Desdemona and his own subconscious survive the toxic systems that surround him? Special showings at most cinemas and WAC & MAC.

Prima Facie: If you have not already seen this brilliant performance – try not to miss it this time! its Jodie Comer's (Killing Eve) Olivier and Tony Award-winning performance in this gripping one-woman play returns to cinemas this autumn. A young, brilliant barrister. She has worked her way up from working class origins to be at the top of her game; defending; cross examining and winning. An unexpected event forces her to confront the lines where the patriarchal power of the law, burden of proof and morals diverge. **Not to be missed!** At mainline cinemas and WAC & MAC

TV & Film Preview:

Saturday 28th September:

18.15 – BBC1: Strictly Come Dancing – Despite behind the scenes controversies, it is still popular

21.15 – BBC1: Apples Never Fall – I enjoyed the first episodes of this new drama series based on the best-selling novel by Liane Moriarty. Starring Annette Bening and Sam Neill

22.00 – BBC4: Nostalgia - Drama starring Pierfrancesco Favino. After 40 years away, entrepreneur Felice returns to his hometown of Naples, where his past begins to eat away at him.

23.05 – Channel 4: Once Upon a Time in Hollywood – Excellent film for Saturday night! A fading TV actor and his stunt double strive to hang on to their careers during the final years of Hollywood's Golden Age in 1969 Los Angeles. They are drawn into the orbit of both ill-fated rising star Sharon Tate, and Charles Manson and his cult of zealous followers. Directed by Quentin Tarantino, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie.

21.30 – BBC2: The Battle for Black Music – Charting the shocking story of how some of music's most loved artists - from Louis Armstrong to Prince - were exploited by the music industry on the basis of their race. **Part 2 at 22.30**

23.30 – BBC2: Sounding Out The Drifters – Band members talk about their band and the songs they perform, including Under the Boardwalk and On Broadway. (Even the sad songs sound happy!)

23.55 – BBC2: Sounding Out BB King - The legendary American blues guitarist and singer-songwriter is filmed at a recording session at Command Studios in Piccadilly, during the sessions that led to the BB King in London album.

00.20 – BBC2: A Bigger Splash - Drama starring Tilda Swinton and Ralph Fiennes. A rock star enjoys a holiday with her lover on a remote Sicilian island, but tensions arise when her hedonistic ex-husband arrives with a young woman.

Sunday 29th September:

19.15 – BBC1: Strictly Come Dancing – The Results – Who will be the first to go?

21.00 – BBC1: Nightsleeper – I am sorry, I gave up watching this serial after episode 1. Too many sub-plots and drawn out - it could have been done in 2 episodes. But, some people like it?

21.00 – BBC4: Magic of Mozart at The Proms - The international Mahler Chamber Orchestra perform music by Mozart, joined by multi-Grammy-nominated Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes who directs the orchestra from the keyboard as the composer himself would have done

21.00 – ITV1: Joan - Fact-based crime drama about jewel thief Joan Hannington, starring Sophie Turner. A young Kent mother is trapped in a catastrophic relationship with a criminal, but she flees after he brings danger to their door and takes drastic action to keep her six-year-old daughter safe.

22.00 – BBC2: Schindler's List – Excellent Oscar winning film based on reality. Steven Spielberg's classic biographical drama starring Liam Neeson, Ben Kingsley and Ralph Fiennes.

23.15 – ITV1: Tom Jones - I thoroughly enjoyed the first 2 episodes of this new interpretation of the Fielding novel. Starring Solly McLeod and Sophie Wilde. **Next episode is at 00.10**

Monday 30th September: Monday Night is Quiz Night!!

19.30 – BBC2: Mastermind

20.00 – BBC2: Only Connect

20.30 – BBC2: University Challenge

20.30 – BBC1: Slavery on the High Street – Documentary -For seven years, vulnerable victims were trafficked by a gang into the UK and forced to work making food for some of the country's biggest brands across London and the east of England.

21.00 – BBC2: Mozart's Rise of Genius - Child prodigy, flawed human, musical giant. Letters, manuscripts and performances reveal the making of a man who created some of the world's most magnificent music.

21.00 – ITV1: Joan – Episode 2 of the serial

23.30 – BBC4: Truman and Tennessee – An Intimate Conversation - Documentary examining the lives and work of literary giants Truman Capote and Tennessee Williams. Comparisons are drawn between the men's American Deep South upbringings, their urbane public images and their then-taboo homosexuality.

Tuesday 1st October:

23.05 – BBC2: Have I Got News for You – US - American version of the long-running satirical entertainment show.

Wednesday 2nd October:

21.00 – BBC1: Ludwig - Cryptic comedy drama. Will accidental detective John 'Ludwig' Taylor find his missing brother? with David Mitchell and Anna Maxwell Martin.

23.30 – BBC2: Yardie - Crime drama starring Stephen Graham, Aml Ameen and Shantol Jackson. Sent to lie low in Hackney, east London, a hot-headed Jamaican drug runner finds his past catching up with him when he meets his new boss.

Thursday 3rd October:

21.00 – Channel 4: Taskmaster – A group of comedians continue to tackle the toughest endurance test on TV

20.00 – BBC4: Elizabeth Taylor: England's Other Elizabeth - A profile of the double Oscar-winner filmed at the time of her visit to Britain in 2000, when she received a damehood from the Queen.

21.00 – BBC4: Cat on a Hot Tin Roof – Excellent drama based on Tennessee Williams's play, starring Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman and Burl Ives. Strained emotions mark the birthday celebration of southern plantation owner and patriarch Big Daddy.

Friday 4th October:

20.00 – BBC1: Would I Lie to You – an episode of previously unseen material

21.00 – BBC1: Have I Got News for You – Return of the popular satire panel show. Kevin Bridges hosts, with journalist Helen Lewis and comedian Chloe Petts joining Ian Hislop and Paul Merton.

21.00 – ITV1: Joker - Psychological drama starring Joaquin Phoenix. Clown-for-hire and aspiring stand-up is also a social outcast who struggles with his mental health. When a video makes him a laughing stock his emotional state rapidly deteriorates - with violent results.

21.00 – BBC2: Elizabeth Taylor: Rebel Superstar - Actor, feminist, business mogul, activist: Elizabeth Taylor broke the mould.

22.40 – BBC1: Graham Norton Show – With guests Hugh Grant, Greg Davies and Sebastian Stan

A Few Cartoons:



Some Funnies to Finish With:

I'm a big fan of 70's music and just got back from a Hot Chocolate fan club picnic It started with a quiche

A conspiracy theorist mate of mine just won conspiracy theorist of the year. I said 'I bet it was rigged!'

To all the people who said I wouldn't amount to anything because of my procrastination. Well just you wait.....

I went to a fancy-dress party dressed as an alarm clock. I left early... People kept winding me up!

This morning I used Red Bull instead of water to make my coffee. After 15 minutes driving down the M62, I realised I'd left my car at home.

I woke up exhausted this morning, I did the Underground Cave Marathon Yesterday, It was really tough....I Ran Myself into the Ground..

Chocolate is necessary for survival. Dinosaurs had none, and look what happened to them.

My mate had to have an ear transplant. The surgeon grafted a pig's ear on to his head. My mate says it's really improved his hearing, although he does get a bit of crackling now & then.

Supermarkets missed a trick when they advertised 'Asparagus grown in Northern France ' instead of 'Brittany Spears.'

Eight hours into his trial a man from Wolverhampton pleaded guilty to his charges.
Why didn't you plead guilty at the beginning and save the courts time asked the judge
Well until I heard all the evidence, I thought I was innocent

I am not having a good day today – I paid a carpenter to build me a double bed
But he has done a bunk!

I asked a Cow how She felt about being immortalised in a Nursey Rhyme. She said She was over the Moon.

I started dating a female train driver! Just the ticket she is. Looks like we are well on track so far. Not sure where she is stationed though... signals are good so far, bought her a nice pair of platform shoes, but I'm still on my guard

50% off all medieval punishment items - hurry while stocks last.

I didn't do Art O-Level. Wish I had done. I was left with no certificate and nothing to draw on

I once knew a man that got hit by the same bicycle every morning – It was a vicious cycle!

I sat with my wife while she sipped her wine when she said I love you so much I don't know how I could live without you

I said, is that you or the wine talking?

She said, it's me talking to the wine