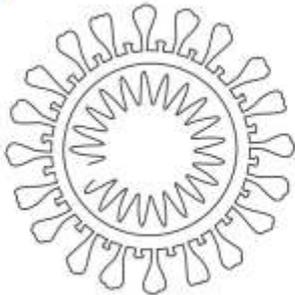


theWI

INSPIRING WOMEN
Aspull & Haigh
NEWS

SPECIAL CORONAVIRUS ISSUE 2

COVID-19



COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus introduced to humans for the first time.

**May
2020**



www.aspullandhaighwi.org.uk

Here is the May newsletter with a roundup of all the news I can garner from our members, much of it is from the group email, so it will be a recap for many of you but some of our members are not on email so it will be a welcome reminder of friends out of sight, some is relevant to the recent VE Day celebrations and a couple of individual messages. We do print out some newsletters and post them to those members who are not on the group email. If you would like a printed version please let me know but we are trying to keep them to a minimum. I had a lovely phone call from Margaret Halliwell saying how much she enjoyed reading her newsletter, she is well and sends her best wishes to everyone and is looking forward to our next meeting, whenever that can be. Nora Johnson is well, busy with lambing, but keeping busy. Her family are there during the day as it is a working farm and livery yard. She admits to being lonely during the evening but as she is very hard of hearing phone calls are difficult, perhaps a note in the post would help. Please make the committee aware of any member you feel might need a call or note.

If you have anything you would like included in future editions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Gill

May already, and we have been blessed with some lovely weather these last few weeks. With the lockdown still on going we are not able to meet up, we are missing our loved ones who do not live with us. We meet up with them via our phones, some Skyping, others WhatsApping and, adventurous members, using Zoom to have group meetings of families and friends. What are we not missing? The noise of traffic, the pollution of air, water and sky. Have you noticed the beautiful blue skies with the lack of contrails? The singing of birds brightens the day. On Thursday evenings the sound of clapping on doorsteps rings out for our NHS and other care and essential workers. The news has many good news stories, over the last month the whole world got behind a 99 year old Captain Tom walking around the outside of his house 100 times to raise £1000 for the NHS. As his hundredth birthday neared, we watch as the sum raised grew through the millions to nearly £30,000,000, Captain Tom became a household name. In Chester Zoo five penguin chicks were given NHS related names nominated by the public. Programmes on tv help us with craft ideas, there are sewing programmes and art programmes. On Facebook we see groups of musicians getting together virtually, to entertain us. Members of our WI ring other members, post photos of walks they have been on, items they have sewn, asked for buttons to make bands to help NHS workers wear masks, who before this knew that masks caused so much pain and soreness! We are weathering the storm, we worry about each other, we worry about the relatives of those we know, we light candles, we clap, we send birthday wishes. It was with sadness I looked at the Lancashire Federation WI website, this was the centenary of the Federation with activities planned to celebrate and now all activities are postponed or cancelled. There will be no regional show this year. When the lockdown started we thought that in a few weeks we would be back to normal, on Monday 11th when we should be having our meeting we will listen to Boris Johnson telling us what will be happening in the near future about lockdown. Whilst we hope for an easing of lockdown we will also be cautious of moving too fast. Stay safe and well everyone.

Hester

Daily Blog

My daily blog is still ongoing, would you believe today is Day51 (more or less I am not good at remembering what day of the week it is let alone how many days we have been in lock down). Sometimes they evoke much debate, mainly they gently seep into the background noise but it's the only way I could think of to bring the beauty of our local surroundings to the members who could not go out for walks in the countryside. When this is all finished I will put them on the website as a personal memory of this weird time.

Gillx

Celebrating 75th Anniversary of VE Day

A few of our members have personal memories of VE Day some have been good enough to share them with us, although they want to stress that none of them look anywhere near old enough to have been there at the time!

Maureen Dittman; it was my 10th birthday on 7th May, it was a very exciting day and my mum put my brother Joseph (6 yrs) and I to bed and we immediately fell into a deep sleep. We lived in Liverpool and news of the cease fire and peace signing had already reached the city. Liverpudlians don't need much of an excuse to celebrate and they certainly don't care to wait. My mother woke us up at midnight wrapped us in blankets and sat us on the doorstep so we could be part of the celebrations. Everyone was singing and dancing, they were all so happy and excited. All the curtains and doors were left wide open with light streaming out onto the pavements, it was the only lights required for the instant party. I was more impressed with no blackout than anything else. They were all having so much fun but all Joseph and I wanted to do was go back to bed and sleep.

Avril Prescott;

I remember my dad had been very poorly and had been in hospital for an operation. As a result, my mum had to go out to work and she had to leave before we went to school. She would put a clock on the table and tell me that when the hands got to a certain place I and my sister should leave for school, being careful to slam the front door to make sure it was locked. She gave me fourpence halfpenny to buy a loaf of bread from the little shop on our way home. We ran across the fields to school to be met by the headmaster at the gate, "What are you doing here" he demanded, "Don't you know what day it is?" We suddenly realized we were the only pupils to have turned up at school! We were so embarrassed I don't even remember getting home. I only know that I did buy the bread but by the time we got home the crust was nibbled all round the edge.

A friend invited us all to a party at the local air raid shelter on the edge of the plantation. She was so excited because we were going to eat sugar butties. I remember everyone being there, parents, neighbours and children. A local farmer had donated straw bales to sit on, it was scratchy on the back of your legs as they swung to and fro. Everyone was happy and singing.

Marie Maloney;

I was 7 years old when the second world war began and my father was immediately conscripted and joined the RAF. We saw little of him for the next 6 years. This 75th anniversary has revived a lot of memories and the programmes on the television have brought back so much that I can remember.

However, fast forwarding 75 years it was so encouraging to see so many people celebrating the anniversary of the ending of the war in Europe.



The people who live in my Street have been very proactive in celebrating this occasion though so few of them have personal remembrance of it.

My Street was bedecked with streamers, banners, balloons and Union Jack's, a truly magnificent sight. Music was playing loudly, mostly Vera Lynn favourites and a party was organized for later in the day (keeping to the 2metre rule).

The day started at 2 minutes to 11oclock



when a neighbour's daughter played the Last Post on the trumpet and the Reveille afterwards. Very moving and she got an appreciative round of applause.

At 4 o'clock tables were brought out onto the pavements and champagne and wine flowed freely. This party which was scheduled from 4 till 6 went on until the sun went down which had us all scuttling back indoors.

How fortunate we were to have had such glorious weather for this so important occasion.!

Marie

VE day +75 - Friday 8th May 2020

Yesterday our street had a party and it began with a message on our street app. Now, I am not really of the modern age and not really sure what an app is but this is what happened.

Thursday 7th

On my smart phone appeared a picture of a street with bunting strung between the houses'

"Is this what you mean?"

This was followed by various comments.

"I think we might have some in the garage left over from Haigh show."

"..... can put it up."

"He doesn't like heights."

"I can borrow some long ladders."

Various people then offered to leave bunting and flags at the bottom of their drives to be used.

"Shall we take a look at what we've got later, after the silence and the (8 o'clock) clap."

Friday 8th.

Quite early in the morning strings of bunting had been strung across the street and displays of Union Jacks decorated houses and gardens.

Then there was a potential problem.

"Does anyone know if the bins are going to be collected."

"Leave your bins at the top of the street then the dustbin lorry won't destroy the bunting."

I didn't get this message early enough and so missed the brown bin collection but by running up the street with the green bin it was there in time to be emptied. The dustbin lorry didn't destroy any bunting but had to do a twenty point turn!!

Later in the day, "The street looks amazing, well done everyone."

"Is it still 4pm start?"

Just before 4 o'clock chairs, tables, bottles and cakes appeared. People kept regulation distances from each other and we chatted to our neighbours. People were able to walk up and down and children rode their bikes and scooters without accident.

At 6 o'clock my husband gave two toasts.

"To the children who have been so good, even though they couldn't play with their friends like they wanted to."

Then "To Our Heroes - past, present and future."

By 9 o'clock the older generation finished their bingo, cake stands were empty and we were cajoled into one last drink before retiring to listen to the Queen's Speech.

Norma Walker.

Members View of Lockdown

MY LIFE IN 'LOCK-UP' - Wednesday 6th May'20 - First of all I want to thank-you all so much for your input on the group. I have been reading and thoroughly enjoying your messages/updates each morning - keep up the good work!

My life in lock-up has also been enjoyable if a bit taxing..

A few weeks ago, the family agreed that we would buy a couple of small dogs. We managed just before lock-up to bring our little 'Westies' home – two West Highland Terriers, Penny and Dotty who are simply adorable! When they first arrived they were two bumbles of fur who needed constant cuddles; within weeks they are now little scallions who's mission in life is to alert us to every sound from would-be burglars – plastic bags - neighbour's voices – you name it.....! Vaccinations are now up to date and they are at the doggie 'teenage' stage well before their time as they defiantly ignore any mundane command which doesn't include treats – and why my hair seems to be a source of joy as their little paws go straight to my head I'm not quite sure – definitely time to book puppy training sessions. Despite their crazy ways, they are such intelligent and lovable little dogs (I would say that wouldn't I?) and we are managing to hold on to our much-loved garden as they seem to have naturally obeyed demarcation lines so far.....
Helen.



Messages of hope spotted by Gill Davies on her walk

The Mystery of The Village Bench



It started in the dim and distant past with lockdown and walking with two chirpy Spaniels. Our little trips to the canal and the village beyond. A bench on the green festooned with goodies of all kinds. Raspberry, Rhubarb and Ginger jam, rhubarb, books, Easter eggs and even a quiz!

Who was leaving them and why? Each day something different, each day the mystery thickened. Was it a kindly WI member frantically making jam in her kitchen, or was it something more sinister, a



dastardly Coronavirus plot?!

Rohan and Rusty were intrigued, I was intrigued. The only solution was to channel my inner Miss Marple and vow to solve the mystery. Surely years of reading the wonderful Agatha Christie couldn't be in vain! Day by day we surveyed the scene. Every day a different jam, every day more items. Frustration at the lack of clues. We needed a breakthrough. It finally came in a most innocuous way. Whilst sitting on the bench pondering the quiz a kindly passer by saw my confusion and explained. A local initiative to cheer people up in these trying times.

Not the great unsolved mystery but a lovely gesture by local people. I'll bet there was a WI involvement, all that jam, there had to be!

Pat Dent

When Life Changed

I commence my daily walk, thankful that the sun is not dissuaded by this polluted planet. Looking up through shaded eyes, I see an infinite mass of clear blue. There are no aeroplanes carrying holidaymakers to faraway destinations. This really is the most perfect spring day! The birdsong sounds heavenly in the empty, quiet streets. The little front lawns have been mowed and the sweet scent of newly cut grass is hitting my nostrils. People are giving the fence a new coat of paint, trimming their trees and hedges. Flowers of all colours are putting on a tantalising show, as they dance in the faintest breeze. Daffodils, tulips, Camellias, all bursting with life and the new spring fever. I yearn to feel the same energy travel through my body, fortifying my soul and lifting my spirits. Nature continues to replenish and revitalise the earth. If this phenomenon ever ceases, then man will surely be responsible for its demise.



Postmen are doing their best to keep us amused!

As I continue down the road I notice the cars sitting motionless, like redundant road furniture. Their journeys are temporarily suspended, as so many people are away from their work and schools are closed. I leave the streets behind and reach the treelined trail that leads to the canal towpath. I touch the brambles by my side, which will be covered in plump, purple blackberries by September. Branches are reaching out from ancient trees. Soon they will be bowing, heavily laden with a heavy new cloak of green. In the distance there's a young family - parents and their children on bicycles, idly pedalling along, like this is the start of a big holiday. For the children, maybe it is, but the rest of us know different.

Everywhere is closed. That means no restaurants, pubs, cafes, fashion stores, theatres, cinemas and theatres. Oh well, no more browsing the shops for the latest spring fashions then! We are not allowed to visit

family or meet up friends. We can only go to buy food. I'm already missing the social buzz of catching up with friends, the shared experience of going to the cinema, the theatre, or the gym for exercise. By now I would be thinking about booking a holiday. Life would just be going on as it always has.

Something has changed our world and thrown our leaders into a state of confusion. Our way of life has to change, and it is our social duty to conform. I think about this 'thing' that has changed our lives. Is this some 'Big Brother' takeover of our civilised world? Have we been damned for our wicked, sinful lives? Or, is this a recurring nightmare, after watching the latest blockbuster sci-fi movie? There doesn't seem to be any aliens around me. I'm wide awake, so I haven't been transported to the 'Planet Zog'.

I drive it from my mind because I don't want to be distracted from my pleasure. I hear the distinctive sound of a woodpecker. It hits me from all directions - left, right, and then ahead of me. There must be several; what a thrill! I haven't heard that for so long. I used to see them when I stayed at a cottage in the Cotswolds. I can even hear the sound of my walking boots, thudding along the parched, hardened path. I see squirrels on the ground, grasping bits of food before chasing back up a nearby tree to enjoy their bounty in peace. A part of me wants to hold back some of this world, for isn't this how it used to be? Public transport was mainly used by those who needed to travel. The roads weren't jammed for hours with cars and lorries. Okay, I recall the air was thick with factory chimney smoke and too many coal fires. But we could improve things, couldn't we?

They say the air has become cleaner, without the heavy traffic of gas-busting cars, and aeroplanes, using gallons of fuel. This is Great Britain in April 2020. The world is in the midst of a contagious virus that has proved deadly to thousands of people throughout the world. Our Government is barraging us with instructions. 'Stay at home! No social gatherings! Go out for exercise, just once a day!'

This will come to an end. But, I ask you, will we just return to our old ways when normal life resumes? Or, will we strive to make changes for the better for our grandchildren's sake? I really hope the latter is true. By Sheila Hinds



***UFO's Done !!
Gillian Davies***



***Jigsaws Completed
and passed on - Marilyn Gamble***

Views on my walks around Aspull - Hazel Tickle...



National Writing Day

It's National Writing Day on June 24th. Rhona suggested that we got involved with memoirs by writing just one memory and sharing it with the group.

Here's my memory:

"I was three or four and enjoying the summer. Stretford lay happily under the heavy blanket of a heatwave with baking hot pavements under bare feet and dust like sand in the gutters. I remember sitting on the curb in the shade of the privet hedge and my Nana bringing out a bucket of water for the rag and bone man's horse. She was waiting for it to leave its droppings so that she could collect them for the roses. She took me inside for my dinner and while I ate sewed two big buttons on something she'd made for me. I think she got the pattern from Woman's Weekly.

'It'll be lovely and cool, this!' she told me.

I couldn't wait to finish eating. She'd knitted me a swimsuit – yes – in double knitting real wool. The buttons were for the straps to the bib front and I wish I could remember the colour.

I was soon outside on the pavement with a bowl of water to paddle in with some other kids who were out too. Imagine the fun splashing it about; someone's mum brought out more water too. We all had a turn sitting in the bowl and I sat for a long time as it was my nana's bowl after all. When I stood up the lovely new swimsuit was so full of water that the bib straps were stretched down by the weight and yes, you guessed – bare bottom time. I laughed with everyone and walked inside with the swimsuit slapping my knees".Rhona

"I remember a day when I was around 7 years old. It was hot and sunny (weren't they all when we were 7?) I was walking along the country lanes aimlessly with my friends. We of course were observing the hedgerows, the flowers, the bird song, the smells and the sounds of the insects. Suddenly we were aware of a loud continuous buzzing and located it to a hole in the bank where bees were busy bringing pollen and nectar to the hive. We observed for a while then one of my friends dared me to poke the hole with a stick. Never one to turn down a challenge (I've always been too gung ho!) I searched for a stick of appropriate length while my friends retreated to a safe distance and made ready to run. Having found something suitable I promptly poked the hole and of course made the bees very angry. They immediately swarmed around me and stung any bare skin they could find! I ran like the wind to my home weeping copiously where mum treated my stings with 'dolly blue'.

You would have thought an intelligent woman remembering this incident would have changed her behaviour accordingly. Alas that is not the case - I was stung only the other day trying to relocate a bees nest away from my house. Having been stung just the once under my eye I then dressed accordingly - trousers, hooded coat, gloves, wellies, a hat and gauze material draped over me and successfully relocated the hive."

Some people never learn from their mistakes do they? Hence my failed marriages! Tina x

"Well, it's Spring , the flowers are blooming and although the daffodils are past their best, it got me thinking about an incident way back when...

I must have been about 8 in the days when your mum said go out to play with your friends in the morning and you disappeared for the day. Across the street was a Catholic children's home. For an 8 year old this was a very mysterious place, surrounded by a high wall, nuns could often be seen wandering in the grounds.

We would peek through the gate and wonder what went on behind. Springtime would see

the garden behind those gates, a carpet of beautiful, bright yellow daffodils. One sunny spring day, temptation got too much for us. We decided that our mums' would love some daffodils and no one would ever miss them would they? Clambering over the gate, we snook into the garden, gathering our bundles of daffodils when disaster struck! A hooded figure came running along path shouting at us, robes flowing, we were terrified and tried to flee. Nowhere to go, we were trapped. Caught red handed by one of the nuns! All was well that ended well though and after a telling off about the rights and wrongs of our escapade we were released and allowed to keep the daffodils. Those walls and the mysterious gates were forever out of bounds after that and my mum never did find out about the daffodil, nun incident. We were saved from a life of crime!"
Pat x

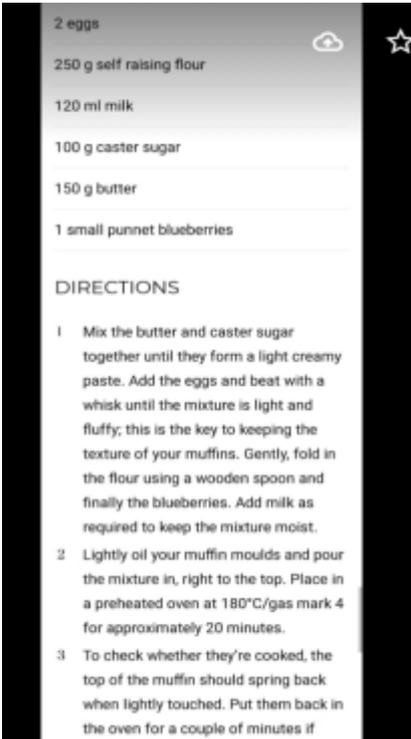
"Oh what memories. Hot sunny days of childhood. Yes, I too had a knitted swimsuit, barely remembered, except for it sagging after a dip in the sea at Blackpool, remember the smell of wet wool? With parents sat in deckchairs in smart clothes, dad with a large white hanky, the corners knotted, on his head to stop the bald patch getting burnt. But my strongest memory - my Whitsun new clothes. A white and pink dress, the white a raised pattern on the pale pink. White sandals, white socks and my new, beautiful, hand knit, white angora bolero. The day was hot, really hot. So hot the tar was bubbling up between the cobbles. That beautiful, black tar with such a glorious shine and smell. I still love the smell of tar that was so attractive to a young child. So sticky, so inviting to play with, and stick in hand I poked the bubbles, oh what a glorious time I had. Sigh. I don't think my mother ever forgave me - yes you guessed I got the tar on my dress, my beautiful bolero, in fact splatters of it got everywhere. I don't remember ever seeing my lovely dress and bolero again."
Hester x

"One of my early memories is Whitsun weekend I would have been about 7yrs old. My grand parents used to cycle down from Chingford, Essex to our house in Kent, about 35 miles. They rode a tandem with a side car (an old motorbike side car) which they attached to the side for my aunt who was only 3 years older than me. After lunch we decided to go to the beach for a swim. We had a car so my dad drove my mum 3 brothers my aunt and I the 7 miles to St Marys Bay, my grandparents were to cycle. Needless to say my nan was not impressed at yet another journey. The route was along narrow country lanes down a very steep hill, then across the marshes which had lots of gates to keep the sheep in. We drove behind them so my brothers could open and shut all the gates. My nan decided she was too tired to cycle so she kept taking her feet off the peddles and leaving it all to grandad. We could see what was happening and thought it was hysterically funny to see poor grandad getting redder and redder in the face, and nan was working the audience, no feet on the peddles, no hands on the handlebars, a cheery wave, looking round and smiling at us. Grandad finally realised what was happening, he pulled on the brakes and jumped off the tandem, after all he couldn't afford to damage his only means of transport. Poor nan teetered on the edge before sliding off the saddle onto the bank of soft grass. All would have been well except she rolled down the bank into a ditch. The ditch was dry but full of stinging nettles. She was shouting and screaming, more worried about showing her bloomers than anything else and no one could help her for laughing. Dad bundled her into the car and my eldest brother took her place on the bike. How nan suffered, we spent most of the afternoon looking for dock leaves and pouring sea water on her nettle rash. Grandad said she always pulled her weight after that." Gillx

Art continues to play a large part in our activities.



Recipes and Baking



It's a sunny day and I felt like doing a spot of baking but wanted to bake something that felt summery. So....I came up with the idea of Blueberry Muffins. Had a recipe which was just the sort I like... throw everything in, and gave it a shot. Am actually very pleased with the result!
Attached recipe and the results of my efforts in case you fancy giving them a try...my son has made these and used raspberries. He said they worked really well too... Pat Dent

Helping the Nurses



I sent a message this morning to the nurse who lives in our street just to check that the headbands were still needed. This was her reply

“That would be lovely they are still being asked for and I am passing some to the paramedics and children’s ward, X-ray and primary care at RPH.”

And 1 minute later “If ever there’s any left I pass on to care homes.”

I have a little patterned material left but have been promised some by friends ,most of the 20 mm buttons

supply that you brought have also been used by me and a friend in our street.

If anyone thinks they can help out by sewing or passing on material we would be very grateful. At the moment we are both waiting for postal orders to come through.

I have sent a picture of my finished ones from today.Norma

Ode to The Onion

By Sheila Hinds

Big, bold, brown-skinned onion
Sublimely submerged
In pies
Enriching the flavour
I chop and slice
Tears smarting my eyes
But, for the taste of you
I can't wait to savour

Such a delicious flirt
You go with anything
I cook
But I won't be the one
To dish the dirt
As you bask in the glory
Of my cookery book

Crispy fried onions
A garnish on steak
Pickled and snuggled
Between the bread sheets
Of a cheese sandwich
For my lunch break

Chinese stir-fry
You can't go amiss
Quickly cooked dinner
Sounds like bliss
Vegetables and five spice
Spring onions tossed
A splash of soy sauce
You know how to entice

Furtively appearing
As a French onion tart
Dark brown, caramelised
Sweet and syrupy
As the finest honey
You've taken my heart
For just a little money

Red onions, shallots,
Spring onions too
Silver-skinned in jars
Pickled in vinegar
Ideal accompaniment
For a ploughman's lunch
Best eaten in public bars

Hi seeing that we are missing our break in Bath, I thought I would attach a few photos of previous breaks. Fond memories.....



NFWI NEWS:

NFWI ANNUAL MEETING:

Royal Albert Hall on Thursday 4th June 2020 has been cancelled due to the Covid 19 virus.

LFWI NEWS:

Message from Jackie Hobson – Chairman LFWI Lancs.
'Due to the uncertain times we are going through at the moment the Committee have made the decision to postpone this years' County Show. In order to save on printing costs could you keep this years' schedules for next year'

CENTENARY MERCHANDISE IS AVAILABLE.

If anyone is interested in purchasing any of the following merchandise ie. cookbooks, aprons, bags, mugs & badges please e mail liz@lfw.org.uk

FUN QUIZ: We are looking for Quiz Masters & volunteers to join the committee. If you are interested in either or both of these rolls please get in touch with Diane at diane@lfw.org.uk

LFWI BLOG & FACEBOOK available www.lancashirewi.org.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

The Board of Trustees have made the decision to postpone all events up to the end of September 2020. The following will be run in 2021 which will be known as 'Centenary Year + One'

LIST OF POSTPONED EVENTS:

Treasure Hunts. Secretary's Workshops. Good Witch Doll. Singing Day. Show Tips. Tea @ Midland. Resolutions. Something Snappy. Wills/Probate info. Aspects of Caring. Photography. LFWI Open day. Delegates Meeting. Art Classes. Gin and Jazz. Braiding Class. Lunch @ Ewood Park. Fish chips/Beetle Drive. Plastic Pollution. Willow Weaving.



MAY BIRTHDAYS:

Judith Taylor 1st - Hester Smithies 3rd
- Maureen Dittman 7th (S)
Ruth Blakeman 11th and
Glensy Fisher 30th

Newsletter content by WI Members, diary and dates by Helen Sloan Edited by Gill Brown
All past newsletters are available on our website: www.aspullandhaighwi.org.uk
In addition there are excerpts and full length videos to watch of some past events.