

Northern Lymphoedema
Support Group Newsletter
June 2021



Dear Members

Welcome to the summer edition of the NLSG newsletter, hoping you are keeping well and looking forward to warmer weather, which will hopefully be here soon 😊

Since the last newsletter, it is with great sadness that I must inform you that we have lost three of our members. These members regularly attended our meetings and will be missed greatly. It is hoped that once meetings resume there will be an opportunity to organise a memorial service at St Oswalds.

As restrictions lift, the opportunity to see those we have been parted from for so long has arrived and we can once again put dates in our diaries. Some of you will have family abroad and due to restrictions, this may mean you are unable to meet up yet, but eventually these restrictions will lift, we hope sooner rather than later. No farewell to facemasks and alcohol gel just yet, however it is a small price to pay considering the events of the last year and a half.

With the vaccine programme well under way, I hope you have managed to get your Covid vaccinations and feel somewhat protected. People understandably remain wary, and anxieties have not diminished. The NHS have provided some helpful advice on what you can do:

STAY CONNECTED WITH PEOPLE

Talk about your worries

Support and help others

Feel prepared

Look after your body

Stick to the facts

Stay on top of your feelings

Do things you enjoy

FOCUS ON THE PRESENT

Look after your sleep

More information can be found at the link below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/10-tips-covid-19-anxiety/>

Meetings

With respect to meetings at St Oswalds, we are making enquiries via the Lymphoedema Nurses as to whether there may be the potential for a September meeting, however it may be 2022 before this will be allowed; an update will be provided via the website/next newsletter.

In the meantime, we thought a get together, not a meeting, just a chance to share a cuppa maybe a light lunch at the Café at St Mary's Cathedral in Newcastle would be nice. The proposed date is Friday 9th July, probably around lunch time, but this will be confirmed once we have numbers in.

If you would like to join us, please drop us a message via the website www.nlsg.org.uk or ask a family member/friend to do so on your behalf by 25th June.



Lymphoedema

An article in the LSN spring newsletter caught my eye, written by Sarah Haigh who is a life coach and Lymphoedema sufferer, Sarah wrote about the secondary Lymphoedema that occurred in her leg after cervical cancer and how much it has affected her life.

She wrote – **“whether she is getting dressed/undressed, whether she is shopping for clothes or shoes, looking in the mirror, and even when exercising her Lymphoedema is always there.”**

We can all probably relate to how Sarah feels.

We know how imperative it is to wear compression garments as well as the need to do MLD (manual lymphatic drainage). We are also adept at ensuring our skin is kept in tip top condition, that we must eat a healthy diet, elevate limbs where possible and that exercise is essential. We are well versed on the physical practicalities, but what about the psychological aspect, how it makes us feel?

Sarah Haigh goes on to say, **“As far as cancer journeys go, mine was quick and relatively easy; however, I have found the development of and living with, lymphoedema a much harder path to follow.”**

Sarah goes on to say it has affected her self-esteem, self-image, and confidence.

In a previous newsletter, I wrote about attending the AGM in Manchester where some of the meeting attendees were wearing brightly coloured support bandages with pride. I also recall writing about visiting Gran Canaria and noticed many walkers donning their support bandages and just getting on with it!

However, not everyone feels comfortable being able to do that. I have tried doing that several times but still feel self-conscious and end up just covering up, I think I just need some lymph confidence!

During colder months it is easier to cover up, no one sees the bandages as they are hidden under layers; I personally find the cooler weather keeps my swelling under control. The downside of winter is exercise levels tend to reduce which then leads to weight gain!

Warmer months make it difficult to cover up, the bandages are visible and uncomfortable to wear with the increase in temperature tending to exacerbate swelling. However, healthier eating

can be easier in the summer with the potential to exercise more.

Advantages and disadvantages with all weathers!

We all have our own routines for coping with our Lymphoedema and what works for one person may not for another, but please let me know what works for you and what you have found beneficial; just pop a message on the website or make a note and bring it to the next meeting, there will be one eventually 😊

For me, elevation whenever possible is a must, I also give my leg a break from my bandage at least once a week, just for a few hours, usually when I am around the house and able to elevate. Exercise such as walking, and swimming is a must for me and a massage when pennies allow, not forgetting the healthy eating and drinking water. Guilty as charged though – I am not so proactive with the MLD!

Recycling

Ensuring you recycle in the garden can also help the environment. It is far better to compost garden waste than burn it.

Compost bins have been around for years but are now more popular than ever, not only a good way of reducing waste output, but it saves buying compost, it also has the added benefit of it being organic!

Another good idea is rather than buying new plants pots all the time, try using something alternative, i.e., old pots and pans, wellies or boots, an old colander, a sink, even an old hollowed out tree stump all make good containers and look rather unique.



Trying to make your garden wildlife friendly is easy, try leaving a corner with rotten wood and leaves, it will make the perfect

home for beetles and amphibians. Also ensure there is available water for birds and a gap in the fence for visiting hedgehogs. All these small steps will ensure wildlife in the garden flourishes.

Book review

The Offing by Benjamin Myers

This book was recently loaned to me by one of our members Elizabeth.

Admittedly, I had to google what **offing** meant, but as the reading progressed, I became to understand the meaning behind the title.

Set after WWII, a young man named Robert embarks on a journey, leaving his home in Durham to find work over the summer months; Robert ends up in North Yorkshire, where he meets an extraordinary lady called Dulcie.

Not only does Robert manage to find the work he was looking for, but he also finds friendship in Dulcie; she introduces Robert to new experiences which have life changing consequences.

“A novel about two people, both of whom come from different walks of life and the story of how their innocent friendship. A heart-warming novel I will look forward to reading again.”

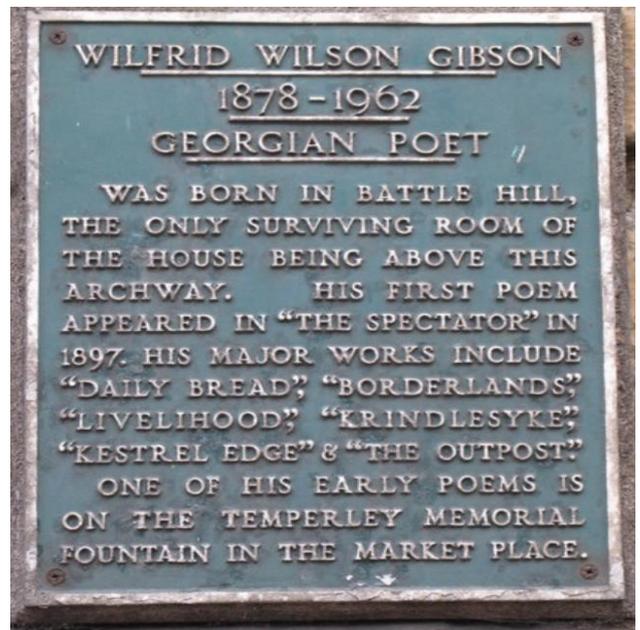
Northumberland

Heatherland and bentland,
Black land and white,
God bring me to Northumberland,
The land of my delight.

Land of singing waters,
And winds from off the sea,
God bring me to Northumberland,
The land where I would be.

Heatherland and bentland,
And valleys rich with corn,
God bring me to Northumberland,
The land where I was born.

A poem by W.W. Gibson



This placard is on Battle Hill in Hexham, the Temperley Memorial Fountain in the Market Place is outside of my window.



Sayings and the meanings behind them....

Mad as a hatter – referring to someone who is mad. In the 19th century, Mercury was used in the making of hats. This would affect the hat makers, causing them to tremble and appear insane.

Big Wigs – we know as an important person. It goes back to the 18th century where the most important political figures would wear the biggest wigs.

Turn a blind eye – in other words, pretend not to notice. It originates from the navel hero Horatio Nelson who used his blind eye to look through his telescope. This way he was able to avoid signals from his superior, who wanted him to withdraw from battle. Nevertheless, he attacked and was victorious.

Bite the bullet – do something difficult or unpleasant, maybe something you have been putting off. It originates back to casualties from the battlefield, there was no time to administer anaesthetics therefore patients were requested to bite down on bullets to distract themselves from the pain.

Moroccan orange & cardamom cake

Ingredients

2 oranges - scrubbed
Seeds of 6 green cardamom pods - crushed
225g pack xylitol (you can use Total Sweet)
6 large eggs
200g ground almonds
50g polenta
25g self-raising flour
2 tsp of baking powder
1 tbsp flaked almonds

Method

Pop the whole oranges in a pan, cover with water and boil for 1 hour until a knife easily pierces them. If the oranges will not stay under the water, place a small saucepan lid directly on top to keep them submerged. Remove oranges from the water and allow to cool, then quarter and remove seeds and pith where the stalk was. Blitz the oranges to a rough purée with a hand blender or in a food processor and pop in a large bowl.

Heat oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3 and line the base and sides of a 21cm loose-bottomed cake tin with baking paper. Beat the cardamom, xylitol, and eggs into the orange purée, then mix the ground almonds with the polenta, flour and baking powder, and fold in until well blended. Pop the mixture into the tin, level the top and bake for 40 mins.

After 40 minutes, sprinkle over the almonds, quickly return to the oven and bake 20-25 mins more until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove from the tin and leave to cool. Serve sliced as a cake, or with Greek yogurt or cream as a dessert.



Please note recipe taken from BBC good food.

Some images/information taken from internet and LSN website.

If you want to contact us, please drop us a message via the website and we will get back to you. www.nlsg.org.uk

Alternatively, if you do not have a computer/internet, ask a relative or friend to do it on your behalf and we will get back to you.

Newsletter compiled by Julie Waters



