

The Newsletter of Dodleston Parish Council

# LocalLife

Edition 37 Summer / June 2020



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- Feeding Dodleston
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**Local Life's**  
Best Community  
Newsletter  
2015



Roger Taylor - Editor

## Welcome all...

Whilst the lockdown will be remembered for many different reasons, there were some very positive outcomes: We hopefully realise how much we need our NHS; less cars and more runners, walkers, cyclists; clear roads and skies and less pollution.

### And our Community thrived:

- So many contributed to “Caring for Dodleston” (and Lower Kinnerton, Gorstella & Balderton!)
  - The outstanding team so ably led by Mrs Julie Boyes, at Dodleston Church of England Primary School. Looking after the children of key workers; organising home schooling and virtual lessons; the logistical nightmare of planning a return to school in an old building with inadequate space. Read the uplifting article by Mrs Robertson.
  - Carl Willis masterminded a programme to feed Dodleston, ably assisted by Connor Maughan and several others – a truly invaluable service.
  - Our own Chapel Stores remained open throughout – serving the community, sourcing toilet rolls when they were like hens’ teeth, delivering orders. Where would we be without Lloyd, Sam and their army of helpers?
  - It touches me deeply that so many of you give up your spare time to contribute to our wonderful community – all those activities that soldiered on, even during the lockdown

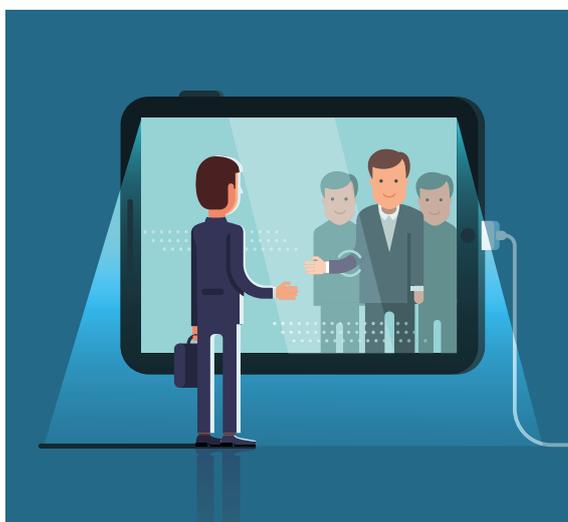
VE Day saw a Bank Holiday and parties everywhere. Read the contribution from Bill Hawkins’ grandsons and realise what a terrifying experience active service must have been. Mums & Dads – make sure your children “Never Forget”.

My personal favourite is the touching story of Bob & Betty Hughes who met on VE Day - a brief lesson in social history. Children – your grandparents are living history lessons. Find out as much as you can.

### Dates for the Parish Council Meetings

**The dates are the 2nd Monday of the odd numbered months – now virtual meetings @ 7.00pm**

- July 13th
- September 14th
- November 9th



# Community Comes Together

## Our community joins together to help during the coronavirus crisis

During the coronavirus crisis we have all no doubt read and heard many references to community's joining together. Well Dodleston has been a great example of this and was actually praised very early on by Cheshire West and Chester Council for our early initiatives.

Before lockdown was announced Dodleston Parish Council arranged a meeting with various stakeholders in our community to discuss how as a community we could join together and organise ourselves in a way to assist anyone within the community who needed help and to also provide a means of communicating anything significant within the community.

An idea developed to form Cluster Groups within the community and 19 of these were created across the whole parish area with designated cluster leaders. Each leader then communicated to every home in their Cluster Group, initially through a flyer on the front of the last issue of Local Life



sent out shortly before lockdown was imposed, with their details in case someone needed to make contact, and also with details of a specific WhatsApp group for their individual cluster group. Each of these leaders then joined a Cluster Group Leaders WhatsApp Group to share experiences, ideas, etc among all the Cluster Group Leaders.

To our knowledge every home in the community received the flyer and an invite to join their own cluster WhatsApp group.

The WhatsApp groups appear to have been very useful, and although as time has gone on communication within these has died down as a new sense of normality prevails and everyone gets used to the new (hopefully temporary) norm, they have proved very useful for communicating stuff like details on the Meals on Wheels Service.

**So, in summary, if you need any help with collecting / arranging shopping, medication, dog walking, newspaper delivery or anything else please ask your neighbours for details as to how get in touch with your Group Leader if you did not retain the details from the last Local Life.**

## Historical 1st Video meeting for Dodleston Parish Council.

The first video conference technology dates back to the audio wires of the 1870's and Bell Lab's video phone in 1927 when the concept of transmitting an image alongside audio over wire was born. It wasn't until 1927 that Bell Labs connected with Washington, DC officials and the president of AT&T in NYC via a two-way audio connection and one-way video connection.

Video conferencing was more widely adopted in the 80's but it has taken Dodleston Parish Council until 2020 to hold its first ever remote Parish Council meeting using video conferencing technology.

The global COVID-19 crisis has forced many changes to everyone's way of life and business' and local government have also had to adapt how they operate and meet, without meeting in person, to carry on with their business.

The government made changes to the law to give powers to County, Town and Parish Councils to use video conferencing to meet remotely and on Monday

11th May Dodleston Parish Council met for the first time using a Skype video meeting. The meeting was open to members of the public to join in as they would at a normal meeting and the link to the meeting was posted on the Parish Council website but no one joined us.

Most Cllrs have held video conference calls before, but for some it was a first, and with broadband quality varying around the Parish it did mean that sound and vision was at times challenging. All 10 Councillors plus the Clerk were visible on one screen. At one time during the meeting I could only see the top half of Cllr Willis' head, positioned over the bottom half of Cllr Jones head, this created the most disturbing hybrid Councillor and I did have to halt the meeting and ask for a realignment of camera angles as it was too off putting!!

With the requirement to stay safe during the COVID crisis we had no alternative in holding the meeting this way, and in general it worked well, but I hope that we can get back to normal meetings soon.

**Stay Positive, Stay Safe**

**Mike Maughan**

**Chairman, Dodleston Parish Council**

# Dodleston Pre-School

## Well what a funny old time we are experiencing!

**Our lovely pre-school sadly closed on the 20th March 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic.**

During our final days of opening there was talk of lockdown and each time we tidied up or read a story we wondered if we were doing so for the last time; despite the feeling of the unknown we enjoyed some wonderful weeks welcoming new children, building enormous towers from blocks, swinging on the tyre swing and finding many uses for giant cardboard boxes.

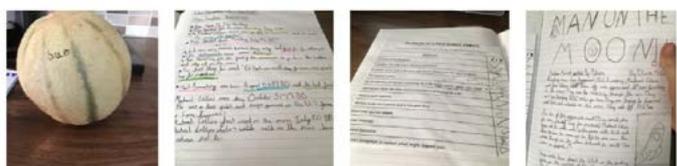
Some of our children and staff were self-isolating before this date so numbers were depleted and awful as it seemed to be closing, we knew it was for the right reasons. Waving goodbye to the children and families was heart-breaking, we knew it would be some time before we saw them, but we never imagined it would be so long.

Technology is a wonderful thing however and although it is not the same, we have been able to stay in touch with our families and they with us. Our online journal system and closed Facebook group have allowed families to share photographs and videos of their children with us and we have been able to respond with admiration for their achievements and support for further development of ideas. Staff have enjoyed sharing their own adventures with the children and stories have been read and songs been sung online. It is not the same, but for the staff, we have felt that we have been able to connect and hope that the children have enjoyed seeing our faces and hearing our voices too.

Reports from home have shown many ingenious activities dreamed up by our children's imaginations and many practical skills have been exercised also. We have seen the construction and riding of a skateboard using items from around the house, a garden assault course, bicarbonate of soda volcanoes, toasted marshmallows, a spaceship in the garden, car washing, watching caterpillars develop and making giant paper hugs to send to relatives – these are just a few examples!

The purple ladies have been using their time effectively too, through the children's home activities, we are able to track children's development from home and update records, we also have short, online training courses to complete in areas such as child development, safeguarding, food hygiene and the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. This week, we have all attended a 23-hour online conference with associated reflective written work and learnt a huge amount about different approaches to behaviour management.

**We miss being part of the community and cannot wait to return and be back in full swing when things are safe for everyone. Stay safe out there!**



# Dodleston Primary School



## Dodleston Primary School

I love my job! I love every aspect of it and every day of it – stepping into the classroom always brightens my mood and often gives me those hearty laugh out loud moments that hurts your belly. Every year I have 'the best class' with 'the best pupils' because I work in 'the best school'. When schools closed back in March, I couldn't imagine how home schooling would work – home isn't school and most parents aren't teachers. Was I worried – yes! But that worry didn't last as I watched the pupils in my class and all our pupils at school continue to blossom and grow in so many different ways imaginable.

Our pupils might not be in our school building, but they are learning without a doubt. As teachers, we post work daily via our communication systems on Maths, Literacy and Topic and it is great to have work sent back to us to view. We've read some fascinating PowerPoints on the Solar System, persuasive leaflets encouraging visitors to visit the Globe theatre, read stories about the forests and seas and have had instructions on what to pack for each holiday destination I may take in the future. All this has been amazing and shown our pupils' conscientious attitudes to their studies both with parental support and independently. Seeing parents act out scenes from Macbeth with their children, make letters of the alphabet with their bodies and have a go at the daily fun challenge have been a joy to see.

But learning isn't just about academic knowledge. The National Curriculum states that the role of schools is to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences for later life. This is exactly what our children are being taught in their homes now:

- resilience, to cope with new and difficult situations and embrace them with positivity and hope;

- patience, to take each day as it comes and ride out this storm for however long it takes;

- organisation, be it organising their time, their work, their bedroom;

- compassion, thinking of others and their needs and how they can help in the smallest of ways just by putting a rainbow in the window and a strong sense of community, knowing how their actions and movements can impact on others.

This time will definitely prepare our children for a society that may be very different and give them the experiences to cope in later life. These are just a few things (of the many) that our pupils are learning, and it is valuable learning.

So, when I hear talk of 'the lost months of learning' I find myself shouting at the TV. We are all learning – I've learnt many new skills myself at home as well as learning more about myself and my family. I've learnt that teaching time to my own son can be frustrating and that saying something louder doesn't really make it easier to understand! I've learnt there is a big difference in teaching a whole class and teaching one of your own children and it isn't always easy! I know I'm an eternal optimist and will remember this home learning time fondly and forget the tears and tantrums (my own). Parents are doing an amazing job doing something I trained for four years to do. But it is a special thing to do and from the photos we have sent in to school there has been a lot of fun at home too!

Do I miss my job – of course I do but it has evolved. Today I had my first online Zoom Maths lesson with my amazing Year Six and I was so proud to see them settle to the tasks with focus and concentration - you wouldn't have known we weren't in the classroom. We will remember this time of learning and maybe continue some of the great methods that have been started. That's the great thing about teaching and learning, it continues throughout our life!

**What have you learnt today?**



## Feeding Dodleston

With the lockdown in place and elderly and vulnerable people discouraged from going out, there was potentially a huge problem for many villagers. Up steps **Carl Willis!**

Carl, a Parish Councillor and professional chef, decided to offer a solution. He teamed up with Connor Maughan and, together, they came up with a process which, thanks to their hard work and initiative, provided an invaluable service.

The process. Menus were provided on a 14-day rolling basis. They quickly learned which were the most popular dishes and set about sourcing the ingredients:

**1. Fresh Vegetables.** Carl visited his supplier, North West Produce at Saltney, every single day at 7.30am. They were extremely helpful – even donating free food so that those who were less able to pay could still enjoy freshly cooked food every day.

**2. Fresh Meat.** Carl used his long-time supplier, Llechwood Meats from Anglesey, who delivered every other day. They were also generous in throwing in some freebies.

**3. Chapel Stores.** What a huge range of produce is stocked at our village stores! As a result, they were always able to satisfy demand.

**Taking Orders.** Initially, this was Carl's job. As things became busier, Jan Maughan took over. Ideally, Payment was by BACS but some customers preferred cash which would be left out so social distancing rules weren't broken. They were even able to cater for dietary needs – people with a gluten intolerance, for example. A main course cost £5.95 which rose to a total of £7.50 for a second course. Everything was carefully costed so that the enterprise neither ran at a loss nor a profit.

**Delivering.** They had plug-in units in their vehicle so the food was hot when it was delivered. On the average weekday they would supply 24 homes – fish pie, noodles and sausage & onion casserole were particularly popular. Demand soared on Sundays when a traditional English roast was offered – 40 meals had to be split into two deliveries between 12.30 & 1.30. When the demand was high or Carl was otherwise engaged, Mike & Jan Maughan and Josh Buchanan stepped in.

With Thanks to....  
**John Williams** whose generous donation helped to get the thing started; **Claire & Mel** and all the other helpers who have shopped, delivered and made lockdown bearable; **Conor, Jan, Mike and Josh**; and **MOST OF ALL – That splendid fellow, Carl Willis!**



## Chapel Stores News

Well, what an interesting few weeks since the spring edition.

Nothing could have prepared us for what we are currently going through with Covid-19 and the lockdown.

We acted quickly and implemented our safety procedures from the middle of March, and then had to reduce our opening hours from the 24th March due to staff taking time off to self-isolate. Thankfully, we all remain fit & healthy.

We are lucky to have the help of George Macready in the shop & Julie Owen in the shop & Post Office.

And local young volunteers Ethan Thompson & Harrison Burke helping us with our deliveries free of charge. Well done to them.

Our procedures have been welcomed by customers and staff to keep us all safe and we will continue with these measures for as long as necessary.

All through lockdown we have managed to source most of the items that were in short supply at the supermarkets. We have also kept our prices low and not inflated anything due to high demand. Well done to those who tried us successfully first and got the supplies that they needed.

We will still be delivering groceries for the foreseeable future, we did deliveries before Covid-19, to customers who are unable to get to us, and will carry on doing this.

Our telephone number is 01244 660342 or find us on Facebook

We have had another local honey delivery, the honey is from hives in Marford, Pulford and Eaton.

Father's Day is next on the calendar Sunday 21st June. As usual we have some wonderfully exclusive Cards (Also seen in John Lewis, we are trendsetters, what can I say)?

**More than just a Village Shop & Post Office. We hope to see you soon – Stay Safe.**

Best Wishes from Samantha, Lloyd & the team xxxxx

Since last writing for local life in February things have not exactly gone as we expected! But in true WI style we have risen to the challenge and won't be deterred. Our last meeting held face to face in the village hall was in March when of all things learnt how to make soap, given that we book speakers months in advance this was quite fortuitous! Then the lock down began and members of the WI helped to draw up a plan with other Dodleston groups to look out for each other during lock down, setting up cluster groups of homes around the Parish, it is still going on with leaders sharing useful information and doing good deeds – we are grateful to live in such a caring community.

In April we put on our first 'virtual' Zoom meeting by having a quiz, Margaret Hardie was our winner.

In May we had another virtual meeting this time with Ros from the Interiors Shop in Westminster Park, it was fascinating to hear how she set up her business and how the current crisis has impacted her as well as learning insider tips on all things interiors.

Aside from our events members have joined in with national WI events including art history talks and virtual netball. Members have also helped to sew gowns for NHS staff and have been swapping plants to keep our gardens growing.

**What now?** Well, we continue to take things month by month, for many members isolation at home could go on for some time to come, we are there for each other and our community and

continue to do what we can to adapt in the circumstances.

Do contact us at [dodlestonwi@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dodlestonwi@yahoo.co.uk) or on our Facebook page.

Stay safe and well x



theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN

## Pandemic - A personal point of view

Virtually all of my working life has been spent travelling the world up until I took early retirement at the beginning of 2006. The early years were mainly in the Middle East and Mediterranean countries with the occasional visit to north Africa. Despite all the perceived glamour of such trips there was always an underlying fear of disease, civil wars, coup d'etats, financial uncertainties to name just a few. There were also the benefits of staying, mainly in four and five star hotels, great local food and extremely interesting connections, many of whom were well known, but not always for the right reasons!

I actually had about five years learning 'the trade' from behind a desk before I was let out into this big wide world.

Before my first mission, which lasted six weeks, the UK and the world had been hit with Hong Kong flu pandemic. According to the records, about 80,000 people died in the UK and the lives of more than one million were lost worldwide. Some estimate the deaths at close to four million!

Towards the end of the 1960s decade, the earlier events of the Cuban missile crisis and the assassination of John F Kennedy were still fresh in people's minds and, although it didn't affect me directly, I, like many others of my generation, was blissfully unaware of the Hong Kong flu pandemic. We just got on with our lives.

The reason being, there was no serious impact on the UK economy or our way of life at the time;

it could also be the manner in which the pandemic wasn't reported by the media!

When I started travelling, firstly to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region, the technology we take for granted nowadays wasn't even a glint in the eyes of its eventual developers. Making a 'phone call was a protracted business and the lines unreliable. The burgeoning telex system was in its infancy and certainly fax machines were more likely to have been seen in editions of Star Trek on television.

I carried a duplicating book, hand wrote my reports and kept a carbon copy (how many remember carbon paper, I wonder?) The original reports were then enveloped and transmitted to London by secure means, either to be read, filed or never seen again! But at least I had my carbon copy.



Despite everything that life throws at you, life still goes on but, with our modern technology, it's virtually instant. Events happen and within seconds, they are broadcast worldwide for everyone to see and have an opinion on. That's why this pandemic is completely different from any other that has affected our well-being in history.

The most fatal pandemic in recorded history was the Black Death (also known as The Plague). It killed an estimated 75-200 million people worldwide in the 14th century.

Throughout human history, there have been a number of pandemics of diseases such as smallpox and tuberculosis. Other notable pandemics include the 1918 influenza pandemic, aka Spanish Flu, more of which below.

In 1665 a small village in Derbyshire, Eyam, was hit badly by a plague. A flea infested bundle of damp cloth arrived from London for a local tailor. Within one week many villagers started dying after being bitten by the fleas. The disease spread widely through Eyam and the local Rector decided to quarantine the village from the outside world. The plague lasted 14 months and out of a population of about eight hundred, 273 individuals died. The village's

actions prevented the disease from spreading into surrounding areas.

A further pandemic that wreaked havoc was the so-called Spanish Flu in 1918. It was first reported in Spain, hence the name, but had originated in France and then infected most of the world. It's estimated 228,000 lives were lost in the United Kingdom and 50,000,000 died worldwide.

By late 1989, the emphasis of my work had shifted from the Middle East to China and ASEAN countries. This was following on from the reported massacre in Tiananmen Square, Beijing during the middle months of 1989. My travels took me to the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand. I also visited Vietnam on many occasions, one notable

date was travelling east on 11 September 2001 (9/11), but that's another story!

It was between 2002 and 2004 that the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) pandemic took hold, especially in Far Eastern countries. The scale of the spread of the infection was extensive but thankfully there were very few deaths reported in European countries. I was regularly visiting Hong Kong and China during this period, plus other ASEAN countries and apart from having my temperature taken remotely at airports, I'm pleased to say I wasn't affected in any way. However, I do

recall arriving back in the UK on a flight from Hong Kong and reading in the press the next day that a passenger on the same flight had contracted SARS!

Interestingly, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is caused by SARS-Cov-2, a strain of coronavirus related to the one which caused SARS!

I am now resident in Dodleston and we are coping well with the lockdown, but it is the scale of the media intrusion and reporting that gives concern. The vast total of deaths is obviously very upsetting, and the strain imposed on the fantastic NHS equally so.

I am looking forward to the time when, or perhaps if, we do resume to anything like normality and then the political recriminations will begin – if, in fact, they haven't already?

**One thing is certain, hindsight is the only truly perfect science!**

**Bernard Dennis MBE**

**Chairman Dodleston Local History Group**

## St Mary's Church, Dodleston

### True friends

**They say you find out who your true friends are when you are in trouble. People will cut and run or just be very standoffish. Well, we have found out that our true friends over the last two months may have been people we never even knew before the dreaded lockdown and shielding became a new way of life.**

This village has shown itself to be a very caring and neighbourly community. I'm sure it was already but it has been essential that, as life has turned out over the last few weeks, this has not been turned inward to individual concerns but very much become an outward expression of our neighbourliness.

Jesus' second commandment was 'love your neighbour as yourself'. There have been many people who have been doing just that, irrespective of faith or none. It seems that Jesus saw the importance of this when he put it as his second commandment. It is the very bedrock of our humanity and love for each other that we allow ourselves to sacrifice time or effort or finance for each other.

I know that, in speaking with people on phones or just in passing, this village has turned up trumps for people and so many have felt supported with food supplies, with meals, prescription gathering or just a natter. This goes across all age groups. I felt very supported by two of our younger church friends who, in making their rainbows for NHS, also put on how much they missed "our vicar". Believe me, that gave me such encouragement and continues to do so. Thank you, guys! And thank you Dodleston. You really do care.



It may interest you to know that, as church buildings closed down, the church didn't! Many churches live streamed etc. Ok if you have internet or even a signal! As a certain popular app went down for many people at the weekend I was standing at 11am at the corner by the church gate with just a very few folks - all socially distanced. They have been faithfully standing as I have pronounced a Parish Blessing every Sunday since we closed the doors. This as well as Dodleston is also for Lower Kinnerton and Higher Kinnerton as we are all one parish. Fortunately, God's Holy Spirit acknowledges no borders! Just as well as this horrible virus doesn't either. God goes where we can't.

If you wish to join in any of the stuff that is happening in the wider church, go to Church of England website. It has many links. Of course, there is Chester cathedral website too.

**St Mary's Rector Rev'd Hazel Clarke ..  
hazelclarke@jcscomputers.co.uk**

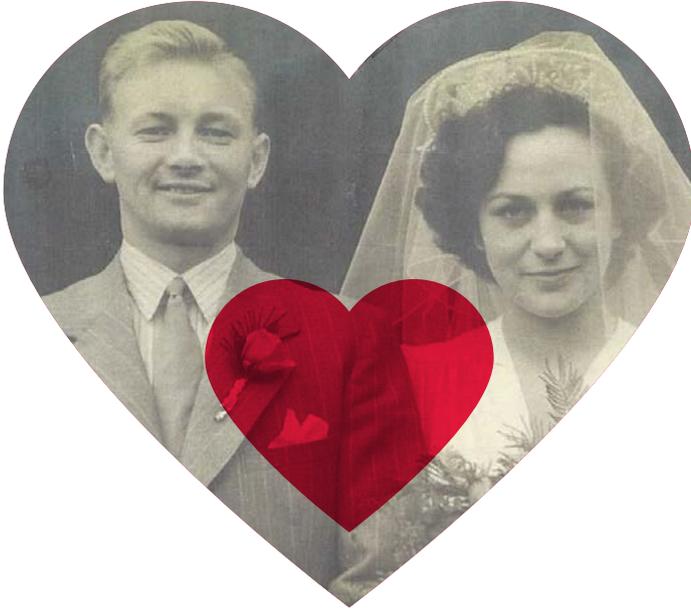
# VE Day Special

## VE DAY... DODLESTON CELEBRATES!





# VE Day - Special



“It must have been fate”, says Betty – Bob had come from Lower Kinnerton to the same party. They met and “We were destined to spend the rest of our lives together”.

## CUPID STRUCK ON VE DAY!

In the Autumn 2019 edition of Local Life, we featured the hundredth birthday of Bob Hughes, a man who (apart from his war service) spent his life in the parish. Sadly, Bob passed away last December but his memory lingers on.

I met his widow, Betty, during the lockdown. I'd heard a rumour which turned out to be true – Bob and Betty met for the first time on VE Day: May 8th 1945!!!!

Let's go back to the beginning. Bob was born at Warren Wood, Lower Kinnerton in 1919. His future wife, Betty Joan Nicholls, first saw the light of day in 1928. When she was about nine her family moved to Dodleston – to the house she still occupies today.

She was a clerk for the Cheshire Insurance Committee when, at the age of seventeen, her parents considered her old enough to go to a VE Day celebration party at Charlie Smith's bungalow across the road (where, I'm told, Charlie's daughter still lives).

“It must have been fate”, says Betty – Bob had come from Lower Kinnerton to the same party. They met and “We were destined to spend the rest of our lives together”.

They arranged to go into Chester together the following evening. They were both on their bicycles and arranged to meet at Balderton and pedal into town. They joined the throngs before Chester Town Hall – joyful at the ending of the conflict. Betty was too young to go into a pub!

Bob wasn't demobbed immediately but finally they named the day and were married in October 1947. After a time living with friends, they moved back to mum and dad's in Dodleston where their first son, Philip, was born.

They were able to secure their first home at 4, Moor Crescent, Lower Kinnerton. They were very excited when the houses at St Mary's Road were being built. They saw an opportunity to move back to Dodleston. They had to wait but they finally managed an exchange and moved to 25, St Mary's Road.

Betty's dad was quite young when he died, and they looked after her mum till her death. By now they were back in the family home where they raised Philip, Robert and Richard.

Betty is now a great, great grandmother – her grand daughter is a granny herself. Not even the Queen has achieved that yet!

Betty feels the loss of Bob (who is buried in Dodleston Church Yard) but she has some wonderful memories of their seventy five years (nearly) together.

# Our Grandads Exploits

We are Richard and Christopher Hawkins and have lived in the Dodleston parish all our lives and we would like to tell you about our Grandad and his Second World War.



*The recovery of One Charlie, the three men in the photograph are from the left William Hawkins, Tony Younger (CO on D Day 26 Assault Squadron) William Dunn Tank Driver*

**It all started on the 1st September 1939 when war was declared, our Grandad William (Bill) Hawkins was 20 years old and had started an engineering apprenticeship with the Coal Industry but also was a member of the Territorial Army so on this day he was drafted straight into the army.**

He was part of the British Expeditionary Force which went to France in that September until June 1940. He celebrated his 21st birthday during this time.

He was in action near to the Belgium border in the May and a rear-guard operation was ordered back to the coast. He was injured in the shoulder and had to undergo an operation at a first aid post, where he had a general anaesthetic and was then left behind in a red cross marked ambulance parked in a field.

When he came around everyone had gone, he stood on the front of the vehicle and could see the panzers across the fields and he now made his way alone across land to the coast, he arrived at Bray Junes just East of Dunkirk on the 31st May 1940. Due to his injuries he was able to board

the destroyer HMS Worcester on the Saturday 1st June, this day was the climax of the Dunkirk drama and it is said:

“He that outlives this day and comes safe home, Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named. . .

## Shakespeare - Henry V

The Worcester had a terrible last journey back arriving at 8.30pm in Dover the Stuka's had followed her most of the way home knocking out her steering gear and killing many on board.

After a period of patching up he then joined a new unit to him the 26th Assault Squadron Royal Engineers where he could improve on his skills gained pre-war.

The Engineer Assault Squadrons are specifically equipped and trained for front line action in support of the infantry using many different pieces of converted armour, and Bill became part of a crew of a Churchill Tank converted into Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers (AVRE) for concrete emplacement demolition, beach obstacles and anti-tank ditches.

He and his crew landed H hour D Day on Juno beach 6th June 1944 in support of the Canadians. Their job was eventually to get off the beach and to a cross roads inland on the edge of a village called Graye sur Mer, unfortunately in trying to complete this operation the tank was lost in a deep culvert, this was the only exit for the armour so a road was made over this by the engineers. After evacuating the tank the crew of six were all hit by mortars, killing four and seriously injuring the driver and Bill. We once met the medic who first got to Bill and he said, “I did not expect him to live”. The four are buried in Bayeux cemetery.

Once back in England at East Grinstead he was under the treatment

↑ of Sir Archibald McIndoe the pioneering plastic surgeon and Grandma had to send the wedding photographs for his face to be rebuilt.

He was on VE Day 1945 still in Hospital at Newcastle upon Tyne and so had a small celebration in the grounds.

He returned to the coal industry and a normal life, until in 1976 the current 26th Assault Squadron now stationed on the Rhine contacted him and said they had located the tank and were going to recover it the following year, would the driver and he like to join them. They did and “One Charlie” was recovered along with all their personal kit and two tons of explosives. The tank was taken back to the engineer base on the Rhine and fully refurbished, it now stands just behind the dunes at Graye sur Mer as a memorial to all those who lost their lives. The artefacts are now in the mayor's parlour at Graye and at the Royal Engineer Museum Chatham.



*Mayor of Graye sur Mer and his wife with 26 squadron of today at the tank "One Charlie*

Following this on many occasions Bill and Grandma met at Graye sur Mer with other members of the 26 who survived that day.

He used to come and see us in Dodleston and then to Lower Kinnerton and we were able to go to Normandie with them.

When he passed away the mayor and villagers of Graye sur Mer came to his funeral and some of the service was conducted in French.

So for us VE day is not quite typical but we still like to remember those who could not celebrate like the others but to whom it made just as much joy, relief and peace.

**Thank you, Richard & Chris Hawkins**



## Dodleston Village Foundation

I am sure that I am not the only person in Dodleston who is looking forward to the first social event in the village hall after lockdown. These are always both



fun socially, and are key fundraising events for our community organisations. The DVF's next social event will, Boris permitting, be the Annual Comedy Night on 10th October. It was great to see last year's star act, Steve Royle, do so well on this year's Britain's Got Talent – a testimony to the standard of acts we are able to book.

Lockdown has severely affected the DVF – overnight our hall income went to zero – we immediately took the decision not to charge anyone who had booked the hall after lockdown – and we were not able to stage fundraising events like the Easter Bingo and the Murder Mystery ( jointly with Dodleston Youth Players) . We were also unable to hold our AGM in May. However, the opportunity has been taken to decorate the Hall and paint and refurbish the play equipment in the recreational field.

### AGM and 100 club

The DVF's hundred club is currently our only source of Income, Membership costs £1 per month, and a monthly draw is held. There are two "megadraws" in December and June at which the prize is £100 . The June draw is normally held at village day, but this year will be held at our virtual AGM at 7pm on 29th June – we will publicize the link to the meeting later- this is also an opportunity for anyone who wants to learn more about, or has any comments on, how the Village

Hall and Recreational field are managed. If you want to be emailed a link to the AGM, or even join the 100 club, then email [richardlloyd@f2s.com](mailto:richardlloyd@f2s.com)

### Booking Secretary

I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Lynn Mayo, who is stepping down as Bookings Secretary in June. Lynn's humour, dedication and commitment have been appreciated not just by the DVF, but also by all the community groups who use the Hall. At the time of writing the role is still unfilled and I would ask for anyone who values Dodleston's unique community spirit, and who thinks they may be able to take this role on to make contact with myself.

**Richard Lloyd**

**Chair, Dodleston Village Foundation**

## Dodleston Youth Players

When restrictions on social gatherings changed, yet again Players found themselves with no choice but to postpone the "Murder is Served" murder mystery evening. This was frustrating but we will hope for third time lucky by next March!

We are all aware that there will be a big difference in the way we go about our lives for along time yet. Many areas of life have been affected but the performing arts have been hit particularly hard because they rely on public attendance. Sport may be able to be played in an empty stadium but there is no point in a cast performing to an empty theatre.

What this means for the next panto is unclear at the moment. There are many aspects of both rehearsal and performance which give us cause for concern. Our overriding priority is the safety and well being of all Players. It is impossible to have a cast of the size needed to be socially distancing on stage or, even harder, backstage.

The recommended safe distance for singing at the moment is not 2 metres but 5 metres due to the aerosol effect of vocal projection. Word in musical circles is that this guidance may not change until an effective vaccine is available.

Also, without a huge change in guidance, the size of any audience would have to be seriously shrunk.

**HOWEVER, be assured, we will be back as soon as we can. We will plan as usual and be ready to 'go' if the green light is given.**



*Left: Snowy Owl, Mel and her family completed the 2.6 challenge in light of the cancellation of the London Marathon with their sponsorship going to Chester Zoo*

## Brownies & Guides

In these strange times, we are all missing our usual activities. However, it seems that our Brownies have been keeping very busy. I asked parents to send pictures and stories about what the girls have been getting up to, for our unit scrapbook. It has been lovely to hear about their lockdown activities; lots of cooking, baking, long walks, gymnastics and even a few Brownie badges being completed.

**In March, Brownies had a special evening of celebration. Great Grey Owl, Janet Butler who has been with Dodleston Brownies for 25 years led an evening of traditional Brownie activities to mark 50 years since she was awarded her Brownie Leadership Warrant. That's 50 years of dedication and service to Girl Guiding!**

Dodleston Guides have been keeping connected despite not being able to have our normal meetings. Guide leader, Mel Hughes has been hosting virtual meetings using online video conferencing and it is fantastic to see so many of our Guides joining in. During these meetings we have enjoyed quizzes, tried some origami, shared 'lockdown stories' and our next meeting will include a virtual pet show!

As is the case with everything at the moment, we don't know when we will be able to return to our weekly meetings at the Village Hall but we are very much looking forward to seeing our Brownies and Guides all together again, whenever that may be.

## Public Rights of Way -

**PLEASE KEEP TO THE PATH AND DOGS MUST BE UNDER CONTROL.**



You may have seen lots on social media over the lockdown period about 'grumpy old farmers' moaning about people walking across their land with or without dogs! Although the farmers are usually portrayed in a comical or negative light, there is a serious message behind it.

While we understand everyone is enjoying the lovely weather and are required to exercise locally, Public Rights of Way regularly cross working farms and a field of lovely long grass is not a playground for your dog, it is a field of winter feed for cows.

Dogs should be kept under control at all times and keep to the path, this is not possible if you let your dog off the lead. If your dog poo is not picked up and removed (Don't leave a poo bag in the hedge) ... the poo is cut with the grass and silaged. When the cow eats this, it will abort their calf.

During this difficult time, please enjoy the public rights of way but please also be a responsible dog owner and walker.



**Eurasian Magpie**



**Rook**

## Magpies **bad guys** v Rooks **good guys**

A few weeks ago, on the first Sunday in May it was International Dawn Chorus day where it was suggested “Make some time for mindfulness” and listen to this special event. In the Dodleston parish you will find a cross section of resident and migrant songbirds which make up the crescendo of our dawn chorus.

**Over the last 30 years the population of the Magpie has increased significantly, this in the main is due to young birds being able to survive the winter months feeding on roadkill, the increase in traffic numbers and speed of vehicles during this time has made this possible.**

In some bird books the opening description of the Magpie is “Some of these birds feeding habits make it highly unpopular” This is due to its ability to observe other birds and also painstakingly search for nests of smaller birds usually song birds.

When at this time of year dawn breaks before 6am this bird will hedge walk your garden hedgerows scanning for nests before all of us arise. It does eat other food fruit, seeds and insects at other times of the year.

I have observed young swallows being taken from nests by Magpies.

Around the year 2000 some research was published by Will Creswell an ecologist who had carried out a five-year research project on Blackbirds in the gardens of Hopetoun House near Edinburgh, 144 acres of grounds. In this data it recorded the major cause of predation of the nests was the Magpie.

**They are the bad guys!**

**Often, I hear people class those large black sociable noisy birds in the same category.**

These are Rooks living in permanent communities or Rookeries to be seen at Balderton and Lower Kinnerton.

They are very sociable birds, some colonies around today were recorded in the Doomsday records.

The feeding habits of the Rook make this bird a farmer's friend, it includes wireworms, leatherjackets, snails, larvae and insects, along with seeds and fruit.

In late winter early spring when ground conditions are warming, and the leather jackets are hatching and feeding on grassland young shoots and seedlings, the Rook will spot them first and you will see them congregate and probe the soil with their large purpose-built bills digging out the larvae. What a natural control method!

They are also good in Autumn time at acrobatic displays which you will see them do sometimes at dawn or dusk.

**They are the good guys!**

Written by Andrew Hawkins



## The Magic of the Outdoors

The outdoors has been vital for a lot of us in lockdown; going out into the garden or to a local park or the countryside on our daily exercise has been a life-line and so many people have a newfound love and respect for getting outdoors. Walking, cycling and gardening have been mainstays for many of us, and people are reporting how it has really helped them feel better, given them focus and structure, and made them more resilient to the uncertainties they've faced.

But this is nothing new, scientists have been studying this for years and there is mounting evidence that getting outdoors, in nature is good for our body and mind. Some Scottish doctors are even prescribing time outdoors to their patients to help treat conditions from mental health to diabetes.

Research has shown that not only is getting outdoors good for our physical health through encouraging physical activity but it can reduce our chances of getting some cancers, heart disease and improve our bone health, even helping people to sleep better. It can be seriously good for our brains too, stimulating cognitive development in children and having restorative and anti-aging abilities in adults. There is increasing interest in gut health (or our microbiome) with getting outdoors being linked to improving the friendly bacteria in our guts – which is connected to our immune systems, helping with things like weight control, heart disease, diabetes and even depression.

A key aspect of getting outdoors is its positive impact on people's mental health. There is plentiful research supporting the benefits of getting outdoors for reducing stress, improving mood and helping with anxiety and depression. What's more, if you get outdoors with others (restrictions allowing) then there can be even more benefits.

There is a host of factors potentially leading to these benefits with factors such as exposure to daylight, natural sounds, sights, smells, interactions, even variation in terrain and exposure to mud(!) all influential. So my advice is to get outdoors whenever you can during and after lockdown, make it your 'new normal' for you and your family, even if it is just for 5 minutes a day, it can be beneficial for your physical and mental health.

### How can you integrate a little bit more outdoors into your life?

- Park an extra 5 minutes away from your destination and walk the rest
- Join in some outdoor activities e.g. adventure sports, Forest School
- Try a conservation working group party (check out Cheshire's Natural Health Service website)
- Find a local Health walk
- Check out some of the ideas and activities for children from HealthRanger@CW&C and others on the Inspire Cheshire West website

**By Suzannah Bonnington, resident of Dodleston, Forest School Practitioner and Health Ranger for Cheshire West and Chester Council**

#### Links:

**Cheshire's Natural Health Service:** <https://naturalhealthservice.org.uk/wordpress/cheshires-natural-health-service/>  
**Inspire Cheshire West:** <https://participatenow.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/stayhomeideas>

**Vicki's Fitness**  
Free Group Fitness Classes on Zoom  
During Lockdown



**Strength & Cardio Training**  
Monday & Wednesday 6pm-7pm  
Saturday 10am-11am

**Yoga**  
Thursday 6pm-7pm

**PT Sessions also available**

Just text 07963 500 607 with your name and  
join our WhatsApp group or book a PT Session!

The Zoom classes can be done in the comfort of your own home or garden. The sessions reduce the feeling of isolation, easing depression and anxiety

## The Importance Of Body And Soul During Lockdown

**Exercise is encouraged by Public Health England during these difficult times. Being physically active is good for both our physical and mental health.**

Our immune system has a boost each time we exercise and provides us with a better sleep pattern. Exercise reduces our risk of many diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, obesity and it helps develop our lung capacity. All of this will help us combat the awful Corona Virus, should we become infected with it.

Many people are suffering from Corona lockdown blues, feeling frazzled and frustrated. It's easy to slip into a lethargic lifestyle, making quarantine snack food choices, which are not normally healthy options. It's important to turn this around. If you feel fitter, you are more likely to want a healthy diet, lifting your mood will also help you make positive choices.

Physical fitness has a positive effect on our mental health, dramatically lifting the brain's response to emotional stress, resulting in an anti-depressive effect. This happens by increasing the release of mood boosting chemicals such as endorphins, dopamine and serotonin. Exercise is fabulous for mental health.

Studies show the most effective exercise, to strengthen the body, maintain good mental health whilst also kicking age-related ailments, should include elements of cardio, endurance, co-ordination, strength, resistance and balance. Our Zoom classes incorporate all these types of training and they are free of charge, which certainly helps with our mental health.

Reducing exposure to other people and staying home is the ideal way to ensure you keep you and your family safe. The Zoom classes can be done in the comfort of your own home or garden. The sessions reduce the feeling of isolation, easing depression and anxiety. It's a great way to see familiar faces, we are a supportive group, giving the feeling of community. We see each other at the beginning and end of each session; during the session your video can be switched off, so you only see the instructor.

It's important for us all to stay in shape during lockdown. Having a set time and structure to exercise helps motivate this. If the time schedule is difficult for you, let me know and I will send you the Zoom workout, so you can schedule a time that suits you.

### Zoom Fitness

Vicki Rahill who has been running the zoom fitness sessions is looking forward to restarting her fitness classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Dodleston Village Hall when Government guidelines allow.

**Contact Vicki on:**

**07963 500607**

**vickirahill@gmail.com**

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# Dodleston & District Parish Council Officers

email: [katepcdodleston@gmail.com](mailto:katepcdodleston@gmail.com)

Tel: 07872927050

Clerk to the Parish Council: **Kate Lloyd**

Chairman: Cllr Mike Maughan

Tel: 01244 661776

email: [mike.maughan@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:mike.maughan@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Vice Chairman: Cllr Paul Buchanan

Tel: 07710 900833

email: [paul.buchanan@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:paul.buchanan@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Cllr Mike Dix

Tel: 01244 661030

email [mike.dix@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:mike.dix@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Cllr Chris Ward

Tel: 07730 564712

email: [chris.ward@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:chris.ward@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Cllr Mark Williams

Tel: 01244 315535

email: [mark.williams@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:mark.williams@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Cllr Richard Kitchin

Tel: 07968 323567

email: [richard.kitchin@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:richard.kitchin@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Cllr Roger Taylor

Tel: 07860 514899

email: [roger.taylor@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:roger.taylor@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Cllr Rachel Jones

Tel: 01244 660206

email: [rachel.jones@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:rachel.jones@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Cllr Welna Bowden

Tel: 07717 574185

email: [welna.bowden@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:welna.bowden@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk)



Cllr Carl Willis

Tel: 07540 282186

email: [carlwillis01@yahoo.com](mailto:carlwillis01@yahoo.com)



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