Issue 100 March 2021

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Dear Consett Magazine readers,

This is the one hundredth issue of Consett Magazine and we'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the magazine over the years, and hope we'll be able to reach 200 or even 1000 issues!

In this issue you'll find out about the Consett Coronavirus Photo Project and how the project's images will be a time capsule to people in the future about what Consett was like during a global pandemic, a very well done to everyone involved, we even used a photograph from the project for the front cover this month (pages 4 & 5).

Derwent Valley Car Club is planning on creating a new hub in Shotley Bridge, it'll be the first electric car sharing scheme in the area to our knowledge (Page 6).

Gary Holliday, a local stone mason has been given a highly prestigious award for his high standards of crafting skills while working on Durham Cathedral over the last six years, and his commitment to not only his own skills, but his passion to pass those valuable skills onto mentees and apprentices - preserving these important skills and methods for future generations (pages 8-9).

These are all precisely the types of positive local stories we love to hear about.

If you've got a story or something you think is positive and local - we'd love to hear from you.

Have a wonderful March,

Barry Kirkham, Marco Elsy,
and everyone who makes Consett Magazine possible.

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Contributors

Brian Harrison
Barry Kirkham
Marco Elsy
Lorraine Weightman
Joyce Shaw
Chris Gage
Christina Groves
Alex Nelson
Liam Cook
Christopher Rea
Audrey Rogan
Dominic Haney

SCAN ME

The Front Cover

The front cover this month is by **George Ledger "Liz."**
Send any drawings or photographs to:
editor@consettmagazine.com

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Consett Corona Photo Project



1. This is Liz, who every Sunday morning played 3 hymns to the residents of her street who were missing the opportunity of going to church. She also played more tunes on a Thursday evening after 'Clap for Carers' so the residents could end the evening with a little sing-along and a dance. (Image: George Ledger)



3. Keeping the people peddling. Jonathan from Steeltown Cycles was very busy during the first Lockdown, when people went to get their bikes out of the garage or the shed to do their daily exercise, only to find they needed quite a lot of attention. (Image: Chris Bruce)



2. PPE makers. - Marj Stephenson, and her husband Jim, answered calls to make PPE in the first lockdown including face coverings and scrubs. The couple used an array of old fabrics and can be seen modelling their handmade scrubs before delivering them to University Hospital Durham for NHS staff. (Image: Debbie Todd)



4. Painted pebbles – After the rainbows came the painted stones, a novel but very popular way to keep a smile on everyone's face. Helen is a highly creative person who painted and hid stones in her neighbourhood for people to find. I was never lucky enough to find one but I am sure everyone who found one loved it and kept it for themselves. (Image: George Ledger)

Consett Corona Photo Project – started in March 2020 at the start of the First National Lockdown. George Ledger, a retired police officer and now a Press Sports Photographer, began to document the impact of Coronavirus on Consett and its communities. What started out as a personal project soon expanded into a growing collection of photographs of people, volunteer groups and businesses all recorded during the Lockdowns and Tier system restrictions.

George was joined by other photographers, Debbie Todd, Chris Bruce and Steve Webb and as the collection grew, they decided to work towards to host an on-line and when allowed, physical exhibitions around the area.

Here are some of the images from the start of the project, later images will follow over the next few months. To see more photographs, visit their Facebook Page: **facebook.com/ConsettCoronaPhotoProject** Contact them at: **consettcoronaphoto@gmail.com**



5. In the first lockdown, following on from the Rainbows and stones came the Teddy bears. People were encouraged to place a teddy bear in their window to cheer people up. Bill and Margaret took this up a level and dressed their bear up in different outfits for weeks on end. Adults and children alike would walk past the house just to see what 'Mr Funshine' was wearing. (Image: George Ledger)



6. MINT PPE - During the first lockdown some of the MINT business club members, based on the number one industrial state, decided to Skill share to produce scrubs for NHS workers. (Image: Debbie Todd)



7. Signs – As the lockdown arrived Shops and business premises began to display more and more signs to alert their customers to Government advice or the number of people that was allowed in the premises. (Image: Steve Webb)



8. Exercise with the family – During Lockdown when Gyms and Fitness groups were closed, people had to stay fit and healthy in what ever way they could. Emma chose to go running with her baby. (Image: Debbie Todd)

Labour Unveils its Candidates' List for Local Elections



North West Durham Labour has unveiled its list of local candidates who will stand for election for the party in May's local elections.

The May elections will see councillors elected to run Durham County Council but, given the ongoing pandemic and the social distancing and safety measures currently in place, the election campaign is likely to be like no other ever conducted, with door-to-door canvassing at a minimum and many people still nervous about mixing publicly. Against that background, local Labour campaigners in North West Durham are also urging residents to vote by post as the safest option.

The list of Labour candidates selected so far for each ward are listed below: -

Crook – Andrea Patterson & Mary Hall
Willington & Hunwick – Olwyn Gunn & Fraser Tinsley
Tow Law – Richard Manchester
Weardale – Owain Gardner
Esh & Witton Gilbert – Andy Walker & Alison Hiles
Benfieldside – Kevin Earley & Lynne Ackland
Consett North – Phillip Marshall
Consett South – Mark Appleby
Lanchester, Burnhope & Castleside - Alison Gray & David Toner
Burnopfield & Dipton – Declan Mulholland & Veronica Andrews
Delves Lane - Malcolm Clarke & Jane Brown

NW Durham Labour chair Fiona Nicol commented: "Labour has assembled a great team of very strong candidates across North West Durham for these elections. Given the ongoing coronavirus situation, we are urging all local residents to register for a postal vote for the upcoming Durham County Council elections. Our message to voters is a clear one - 'stop the spread, avoid the queues, vote by post'".



Derwent Valley Car Club expands into County Durham.

Derwent Valley Car Club, a fully electric car club, is expanding into County Durham thanks to the Innovate UK funded SOSCI project involving 11 partners including Durham County Council.

Project Co-ordinator, Susan Ross, says "We are delighted to expand into Durham, we plan our first hub in Shotley Bridge, our second nearby and hopefully many more in the County". The pay-as-you-go scheme offers low hourly rates, no mileage fees and full insurance cover.



This expansion will allow access to electric vehicles for the local communities. For more information go to **www.facebook.com/derwentvalleycarclub** or email the car club at **jljcommunitycic@gmail.com**



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Simply contact us via phone or visit our website and fill out the contact form to get a call back to organise a time to visit when it suits you! During this visit we will be able to give you our initial thoughts, you can ask us any questions you may have, and we can go over the next steps.

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Local Stonemason, Gary Holliday Awarded Highest Award in the Trade

Gary Holliday from Consett, has been given the Masons' Livery Company : Journeyman Mason Certificate Award for 2021.

The award comes from the Worshipful Company of Masons and is given to those who have consistently shown high standards of crafting skills for ten years or more, and who have also shown commitment to not only their own skills, but to pass those valuable skills onto mentees and apprentices.

The Worshipful Company of Masons

He has worked on Durham Cathedral for six years now and in his time there has become a Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings fellow and a mentor to two masons.

Gary said: "Receiving the Journeyman Mason Award is definitely a career highlight for me. I feel extremely honoured to receive such a prestigious award, especially as I was nominated by my peers.

"Working at Durham Cathedral has provided me with many opportunities to further my knowledge as a stonemason working in conservation.

"I am extremely passionate about passing on everything I have learned through my career to apprentices and young stonemasons to ensure



the traditional craft skills of stonemasonry remains ever-present in the modern world." Gary was nominated for the award by Maya Polenz, head of property at Durham Cathedral, in recognition of his outstanding supervision of the cathedral's junior masons, as well as his own impressive portfolio of masonry work.

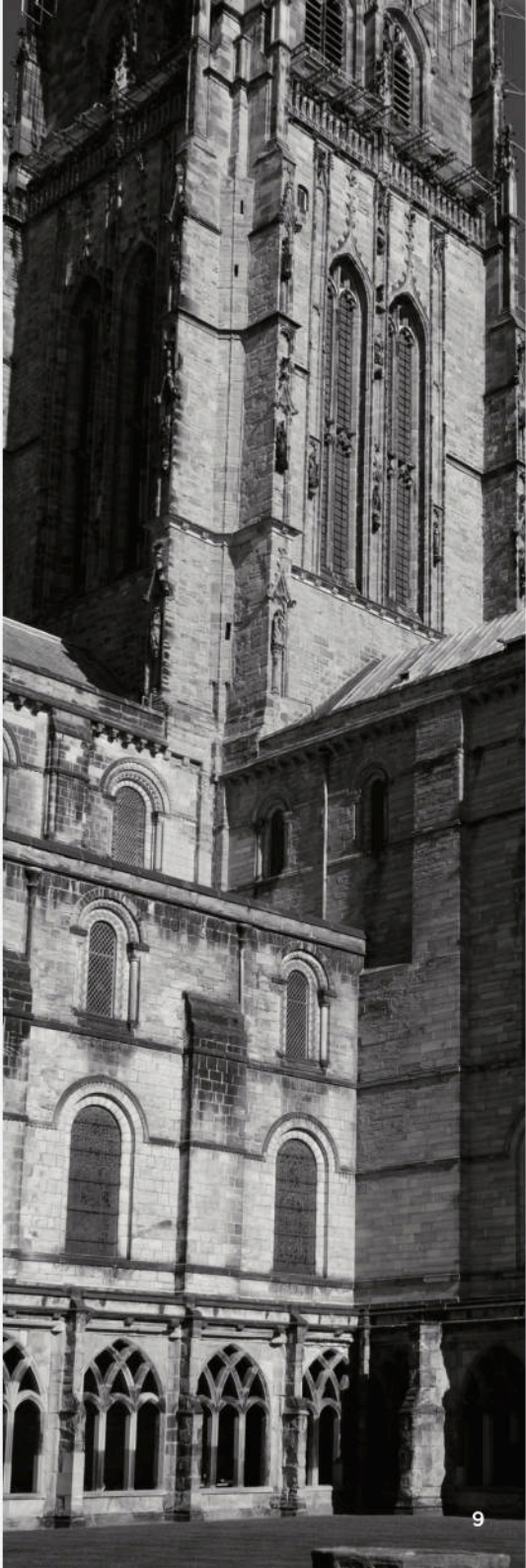
Gary's work was submitted to the chairman of the Stonemasons Award Sub-Group, before being considered by an appointed panel of Liverymen and Freemen with extensive stone industry experience.

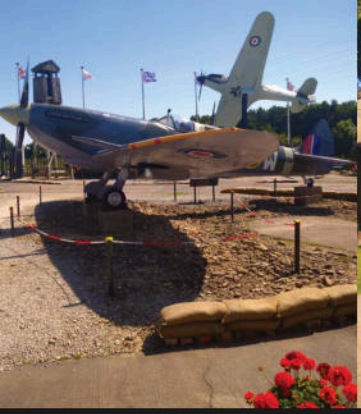
Commodore Adrian Munns, chairman of the Masons' Livery Company Craft and Training Committee said:

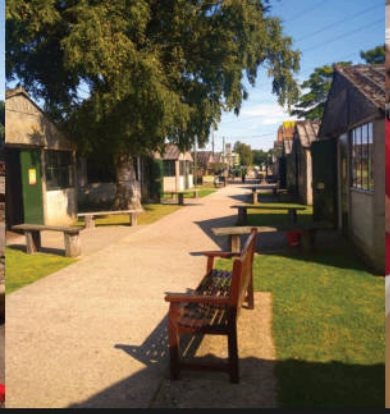
"Since 2014 the Masons' Company has participated in the national awards, developed by the Livery Company Skills Council, that offer through career certification to specially selected craftspeople – apprentices, journeymen and master craftsmen.

"The awards are designed to encourage the pursuit of excellence in vocational education and training through craft skills.

"I am delighted that Gary Holliday from Durham Cathedral has been selected to receive this prestigious award and wish him continued success into the future."









Places to Go: Malton

By Alex Nelson

Something to look forward to! A Saturday visit to Malton's monthly farmers' market in North Yorkshire saw me board the TransPennine train at Durham, with only my car in the upper car park, and all charges waived.

From the north east, Malton in North Yorkshire is an easy day trip, but from the south you might like to stay two nights (or more) and enjoy the delights of Whitby, Scarborough, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway (accessed by bus to Pickering) and the city of York. Malton is an ideal spot to discover all of these, not only by train but by the excellent quality buses run by Coastliner from their Malton depot.

A simple change of trains at York and off towards Scarborough and I arrived on time at Malton at 0924. Malton is across the river from another settlement, Norton on Derwent and both the railway and bus stations are actually in Norton. In the past this was the boundary between the North Riding and East Riding of Yorkshire, both now in North Yorkshire. I met up with transport colleague John Gelson and had an hour in the YO Bakehouse discussing railways, buses and local radio, three of our shared interests.

Malton is a generally prosperous town and I had a pleasant hour exploring and visiting the market where I acquired a pork pie and a dressed crab to eat at my next objective: Eden Camp. I took the 840 bus the short journey to the edge of the town where the camp opened in 1942 to hold Italian and later German prisoners of war. 29 huts are full of fascinating exhibits about all aspects of the war, and there was plenty to keep the youngsters amused too. It opened to the public in 1987.

They say to allow 3-4 hours. If you're a family with kids enjoying the adventure playground and seeing inside a few huts, that's ok. But if you're seriously interested in the subject, and want to study the exhibition boards and artefacts, that's barely enough. In addition to huts, there's a Dig for Victory Garden, and a genuine Tarran prefab house. The Camp was in use until early 1949 when the last German POWs left. Meanwhile rationing throughout England continued until bread (which went on ration post-war in July 1946), came off ration in June 1954. From as early as October 1939 to July 1948 Britain hosted some 402,200 prisoners.

Eden Camp closed at five, and I had an hour before my train from Malton station. I turned right down a no through road and found the path leading up to the A64 which was a considerable shortcut and walked through the village of Old Malton, pausing for a welcome pint at the Royal Oak before continuing along the road to Malton and down to the station with ten minutes to spare. I passed by the Old Lodge Hotel on the outskirts of the small town, and that would be an admirable place to stay to enjoy the area, being close to the bus and rail stations.

The train was busy. Official advice to avoid "peak" journeys forgets that peaks are not just workers on office hours Monday to Friday, but also a trip back home from the seaside on a Saturday evening. The first class areas were full, having been declassified for anyone to sit in. I changed at York and joined the LNER train back to Durham where there were now three cars in the car park after a warm, educational and enjoyable day.

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Pre Season Checks for your Motorhome or Caravan -

by Chris Gage, Motorhome and Caravan Broker.

As we look forward to brighter, warmer days and the long awaited prospect of being able to get away in our motorhomes and caravans, now is the time to think about getting them ready for the season, so that when the opportunity comes, we can set off confidently without drama.

Caravan and motorhome workshops are exceptionally busy at this time of year with pre-season servicing and habitation checks - temporary closures due to Covid have put even more pressure on them, so bookings may be some way in advance. Mobile Caravan Engineer Association (MCEA) members also work in our region and they are also worth using. But there are also things that we can do ourselves, to give us a chance of a trouble free first outing. So here are my 5 top tips for leisure vehicles generally, assuming that they have been standing in storage for some time.

Engine batteries - I often go to stored vehicles with flat engine batteries. A battery will gradually discharge when left unused and once totally discharged for an extended period, may not recover. If you need to jump start a 2007-on Fiat/Citroen/Peugeot based motorhome, there are connection points in the engine bay, rather than on the battery itself. Further information on safe jump starting will be in your vehicle handbook.

Habitation batteries - the same issue of non-recovery applies here. If you keep your caravan or motorhome at home, plug in 230v, selecting habitation battery charge on the switch panel if appropriate and give it at least 12 - 16 hours. If it won't hold a charge, it probably needs to be renewed. Solar panels help extend the life of batteries, however, in the depths of winter they are much less effective. If your caravan is in storage, bench charging the habitation battery at home to full capacity and checking that it is holding charge a couple of days later is a good idea, especially if you use a caravan motor mover.

Handbrakes will often get stuck on if left applied for long periods, so you may need to 'rock' the caravan or motorhome a little to free them off. A little gentle persistence with the engine or attached towing vehicle is usually all it takes and you will hear as well as feel it when it releases.

Tyres - look for cracking on sidewalls due to degradation in storage. This isn't necessarily an MOT failure, however, it is a sign of deterioration. The Caravan and Motorhome Club recommend renewal between 5 - 7 years of age and your local tyre depot will be able to advise, or you can find out how to do it with a web search. Inflation to the correct tyre pressure is vital; the air inside the tyres carries the weight of the vehicle - too little air leads to tyrewall stress, in some cases resulting in overheating and failure on the road.

Water system - the first thing I look at when entering a client's vehicle that has been standing over winter is whether the taps are closed. Even if the water system has been drained, damage may have occurred if trapped water has frozen in the tap body. It's worthwhile recommissioning the water system and checking for leaks if possible before going away.

If you need help buying or selling a caravan or motorhome in the North East, give Chris Gage a call on 07375 074407



Written in Stone - By Lorraine Weightman

World Poetry Day is celebrated on Sunday 21st March. Founded in 1999 by UNESCO to promote the reading, writing, teaching and publishing of poetry; it provides a global opportunity for all of us to appreciate how the power of poetry helps us express emotions, explore new vocabulary, rhythms and cultures and see the world from new perspectives.

Poetry comes from the Greek word 'poesis' which means 'creating' or 'making'. The earliest poetry was recited or formed into songs to help pass on historical or domestic everyday occurrences. Repetitive rhythms and the reiteration of words encouraged the listener to memorise them. Later the advent of writing enabled bards and scribes to chronicle tales, stories and rhymes. In fact poetry is among the earliest records in many cultures, with pieces found on ancient columns, monoliths and rune stones,

We all have memories of early rhymes from childhood. The ambient rhymes often hide stories from the past which are not always of a wholesome nature, but they remain enjoyable and memorable as the sing song nature of them stays with us.

As a toddler one of my favourite vintage rhymes was 'Hey Diddle Diddle' as I loved the thought of a cat playing a fiddle, as a cow jumped over the moon, while a dish and spoon run away together. It may sound nonsensical yet it was very appealing to mine and many more imaginations
I have always been attracted to rhyme - and was lucky enough to live in a family who loved to recite poetry - and as I grew, I became fascinated by Walter de la Mare's skill in telling a spooky fantastical story in his poems. There was always a hint of mystery in his words and his use of assonance filled me with joy.



We had a book on the shelf at home called 'Peacock Pie' and it was crammed with short poems, among my favourites were Silver, Someone, Mr Nobody, Five Eyes and the The Listeners, all of which had a hint of mystery about them. Regularly on Saturdays or Sundays in the Summer, my family and I walked to Allensford, mostly to see the waterfall which I loved. Another of my favourites things were the giant rocks which made spectacular stepping stones across the fast moving River Derwent. I always thought of it as a magical place, and would quite happily while away many hours exploring around the river bank. My Uncle Michael who loved the countryside would tell me the names of the trees and recount stories and poems about nature.

One of his favourites was 'The Way Through The Woods' by Rudyard Kipling which reminded me of our walks through the Bluebell Woods on other days out. While he recited it by heart, he showed me how to use the sharp end of a stone to scratch messages on to the larger rocks - near the waterfall - that we sat on having our picnic after the long walk. Without fail we brought Fentiman's cream soda, Tudor crisps - which were always plain - and a melted four finger Kit Kat, tucked in beside greaseproof paper wrapped ham and pease pudding sandwiches, assembled with Forster's bread.

The sharp stone made beautiful white marks on the grey rocks and I picked up one the size of my hand. I started to write, as my Uncle Michael began another poem by Walter de la Mare that I was not familiar with, called:

Why?
Ever, ever
Stir and shiver
The reeds and rushes
By the river:
Ever, ever,
As if in dream,
The lone moon's silver
Sleeks the stream.
What old sorrow,
What lost love,
Moon, reeds, rushes,
Dream you of?

> Painting is silent poetry,
> and poetry is painting
> that speaks.
>
> - Plutarch

I wrote out the first five words as it was all I could fit on the smooth pebble and put it in my pocket.
Many years later, with most of my family long gone, I came across it in an old jewellery box, and smiling through my tears, realised that words written in stone and in our hearts can never be erased.

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Looking After an Older Pet

On average, dogs live for around 12 years and cats for around 14 years, although many will live much longer than this. As your pet gets older, there are many things you can do to ensure they live comfortably and happily during their later years:

1) Consider switching them onto a senior diet which will better suit their changing dietary requirements

2) Take them for shorter walks, more regularly, and keep them active at home with toys and games

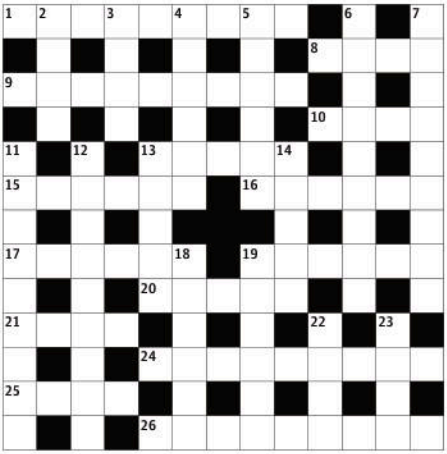
3) Keep an eye on their nails. They're likely to need trimming more often as their exercise levels reduce and cats use their scratching posts less

4) Keep an eye on their eating, drinking and urinating habits. If there're any changes, book an appointment with your vet

5) Lots of older pets will develop arthritis which is often worse in the winter months.

There's lots of things that can help with the discomfort and stiffness arthritis causes including anti-inflammatory medication, laser therapy, physiotherapy and joint supplements. Speak to your vet about which options will be best for your pet

Puzzle Corner March 2021



Across

1. Martial arts expert (5,4)
8. Undershirt (4)
9. Sparkling Italian wine (9)
10. Something that must not be done (2-2)
13. Aspect (5)
15. Every sixty minutes (6)
16. City on the Liffey (6)
17. Metal guard to confine fire to the hearth (6)
19. Fractious (6)
20. Ballet costumes (5)
21. Row — occupation (4)
24. Act of pivoting 180°(5-4)
25. Mood of sullen aloofness (4)
26. Overjoyed (9)

Down

2. Head (slang) (4)
3. Six-sided solid (4)
4. Optical disc for storing high-definition video (3-3)
5. Trounced (slang) (6)
6. Remember (9)
7. Lawyers (9)
11. Lazy — indolent (9)
12. With guile (9)
13. Fast moving (5)
14. Pipes (5)
18. Make a low noise (6)
19. Ancient burial mounds (6)
22. Engrave (4)
23. Rule Britannia composer, d. 1778 (4)



Answers for February

S	U	N	D	A	Y	P	A	I	N	T	E	R		
W		E		C		O		T		H		O		
A	L	L		T	A	S	T	E	L	E	S	S		
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M	O	O	R		P	U	L	L	E	D	U	P		
M		L		F		E		F		O		U		
A	B	U	S	I	M	B	E	L		F	A	T		
L		M		N		E		A		O		O		
S	E	N	I	O	R	C	I	T	I	Z	E	N		

Answers for this puzzle will be published on the same page next month.

Mental Health

I'm writing today about mental wellbeing and mental health, how they affect mental illness, and what can be done at local level to improve all of these, both myself and fellow Liberal Democrat campaigners and others in community politics.

Mental health and mental illness are two different but related concepts.

We all have mental health. Some of us have good mental health, others have better. Some have worse, and some have a diagnosable mental illness.

There's no shame in that. We're humans, and we sometimes become unwell. It doesn't matter whether it's epilepsy or anxiety. What really matters is how they are treated.

I am proud that Liberal Democrats in government introduced the concept "parity of esteem" between physical and mental health. This created - in law - the principle that mental illness should be treated as seriously as and equal with physical illness.

Unfortunately and unsurprisingly this is much easier to put down in a statute than it is to realise in practice. That being said I don't think it's impossible.

It doesn't need to start in the GP's surgery though, although clearly doctors are critical in helping people with mental ill-health. Mental health is influenced by many factors that arise from how we treat mental wellbeing.

Mental wellbeing is extremely important, potentially more important than healthcare.

I say that as a newly appointed public governor for Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, who provide specialist mental healthcare in our area, so I appreciate the importance medical care is to mental health.

Like our local GPs and health and social care professionals, the Trust does good work, but there's always room for improvement and I hope to influence the direction of the Trust over the next few years in my voluntary role as a governor. I'd love to hear from any patients or carers of the Trust with their thoughts - feel free to contact me at ConsettLibDems@iCloud.com.

The reason I say wellbeing could be more important than medical care is that promoting positive wellbeing can help avoid people becoming mentally ill, and can help people living with mental illness recover or improve.

Liberal Democrats sought to introduce a "Minister for Wellbeing" in government, a member of the government dedicated to promoting mental wellbeing. Additionally, we wanted the government to look at every policy from a wellbeing perspective, so that the impact on peoples' lives was examined when forming new policy, not just the impact on the government's pursestrings.

Locally I think that is something that should also be brought in by Durham County Council. There should be a dedicated member of the ruling party solely responsible for wellbeing, making sure that any changes the Council seeks to make will contribute to the emotional and mental wellbeing of local people.

There are many areas that the local council has control over where changes could improve mental health. Having parks and green spaces that we can enjoy, in every area of the town not just in Consett. Social care for our elderly and disabled that is easily accessible and affordable. Good quality social housing, and private housing that is built to a good standard and in an environmentally sound way. Sports, leisure facilities and swimming pools that we can use!

Improvements in any or all of these areas won't be enough to fix wellbeing, but they will be a start.

Above all else what we as local Lib Dems guarantee is that we will speak with our communities all year round to keep them updated, and ask their views and campaign for causes that are important to them.

That way we know the key issues and those that will improve the lives of local people, like demanding the best possible outcome for the future of Shotley Bridge Hospital - and also the Derwent Clinic.

For me mental health and mental illness are very important and personal, and whilst there might not be every tool or capability in local government to square the whole circle of mental wellbeing, I know that local Liberal Democrats and I will focus our efforts on the areas where can make a difference.

By Dominic Haney
Liberal Democrat campaigner for Consett, Moorside and The Grove.

Flying High by Joyce Shaw

Lockdown has certainly put paid to travel as we used to know it, and seeing a plane in the air is now a rare sight. However, it is easy to remember the quick way to travel many miles by aeroplane, and we all certainly have the time to reminisce on those journeys!

I have endured some overnight journeys beside strange fellow passengers….the one who snores or spreads his newspaper all over you, or takes off his shoes so that the smell of sweaty socks pervades the plane!

However it is better to remember the wonderful passengers who enhance the journey and help to make time "fly"!!!

In 2002 I travelled back to the UK through New York Kennedy airport and sat next to a young man. As we sat waiting to taxi on the runway, we looked outI commented to him that all we could see now was the Empire State building as the twin towers were no more. He told me the fascinating and alarming story of his friend, who had been in the next building to the twin towers on Sept 11th and witnessed the horror as his office windows shattered.

I told him that I had been down to the Okifinokee swamps in Georgia and had seen huge wolf spiders and alligators in the small boat on the water. I was feeling rather pleased with myself about the frightening experience when he told me that his journey had been to Peru and he had been in a dugout canoe with piranha and snakes all around him! My adventure paled into insignificance!!

On a previous visit to New York, I had a pleasant chat with one of the stewards and told him that I was celebrating my birthday as we flew overnight over the Atlantic and changed the time zone. However I told him not to bother with candles on the cake as it would be a huge fire hazard on the plane!

At the end of the journey, I noticed that everyone was binning their headphones and so I asked the steward when he would be leaving the lane. he told me he couldn't leave until everyone was off…and I was one of the last lingering passengers. I told him that if he went down one aisle, I would go down the other and he would get off home quicker because I wanted all the headphones!…..there we were with our arms covered in headphones and it served my music lessons for a long while with the pupils advertising Virgin planes for a few months in the music lessons!

We want to extend an appology to Joyce Shaw for misnaming one of her atricle "Undercover Art" in the October 2019 issue as Joan Willis.

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