

Women in Black UK Newsletter, June 2024

Bradford

Joyce reports: We, Bradford Women in Black have changed the day and time of our monthly vigil. We now meet on the 1st Monday of the month from 4.00-4.45 in the centre of Bradford on the corner of Bank Street and Hustlergate (near Waterstones) and opposite the Tiffin Cafe, where some of us meet from around 3.15 for a coffee and to get to know newcomers. We have been concentrating our latest vigils on the situation in Palestine. We find we are getting more and more positive feedback in that many people tell those of us giving out leaflets that they are very concerned about the current situation in Palestine.

- Vigil: first Thursday of each month, 4:30-5:30pm, junction of Bank St and Hustlergate.
- Contact: Joyce Robertshaw, joycerobertshaw@gmail.com
- Facebook: @womeninblackbradford
- X (formerly Twitter): womeninblack_bradford

Bridport

We hold regular vigils and silent marches in Bridport, Dorchester, Weymouth & Bournemouth, and are allied with Dorset Palestine Solidarity Campaign & Palestine Solidarity Movement.

- Contact: jolanda.b@me.com

Brighton

Jennie writes: The group has been highlighting the war on Gaza and our abhorrence at violence from whoever commits it. We have also been taking part in demonstrations against the weapons factory in Brighton where bomb release mechanisms are made for the bombs being dropped in Gaza. This has been included in our leaflets and we have helped collect signatures for a petition to Brighton and Hove City Council asking them to refuse permission for the extension to the factory to become permanent.

- Vigil: Fridays, 1-2pm at the war memorial, Old Steine.
- Contact: brightonwib@11qp.co.uk

Chesham:

Gill reports: We started our Women in Black group back in November 11th with just 3 of us standing holding placards by the side of the road in Chesham.

We met at 12 noon and stood for 1 hour and gradually over the weeks more and more people have joined us and we have moved our vigil to the other end of town to enable more people to join. We meet in the same place and same time every Saturday with different people joining us.

We had a stall after one of the Vigil's to collect money for MAP and within a couple of hours had collected just over £300.

We held a Silent Vigil to remember the 1948 Nakba. Some of the group are having a stall at our local carnival in June to collect more money for Medical Aid for Palestine.

There is another group in Chesham called Chiltern Peace and Justice Group and we try to support each other in various activities to raise awareness about what is happening in Gaza.

- Vigil: Every Saturday, noon, Market Square in Chesham.

- Contact : Gill Walker, gillwalker2013@hotmail.com

Edinburgh

Jan Benvie writes : We continue to stand – and a few of us sit – for peace every Saturday. After our vigil some of us go to the weekly demonstration calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Our WiB vigil is a general call for peace & justice throughout the world. Our signs highlight the link between climate & conflict, the cost of war, not only in human lives but also the waste of valuable resources, and inform passers-by that war does not solve anything.

- Vigil: Saturday, 1-2pm. Beside the Wellington Statue (opposite the Balmoral Hotel) Edinburgh. Contact: Jan Benvie, jbenvie@yahoo.co.uk
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/womeninblackedinburgh/>

Ilminster

- Vigil 7th May, 4 – 5 pm. Ilminster, Somerset.
- Contact: Alison Tavendale [<village.voices@btopenworld.com>](mailto:village.voices@btopenworld.com)

Leeds

Tricia writes: Since October, Leeds Women in Black now hold silent vigils every Tuesday, 12.30-1.30pm, in Dortmund Square in Leeds City Centre usually attended by approximately 30 women. In addition to our original two large banners "Free Palestine" and "End the Occupation" we now also display "Ceasefire Now" and "Stop the Genocide". We hand out our A5 leaflet to passers-by (around 500 a week), providing information about the situation in Palestine/Israel; we update this every 6-8 weeks to ensure that it contains relevant, current information.

In recent months there has been more interest and awareness from passers-by and people often take a photograph of us that we hope they will share on social media. We update our [Facebook page](#) each week with a photograph and brief comment about the vigil. This year in August we will have been holding Women in Black vigils regularly for 5 years.

- Vigil: Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30pm, Dortmund Square
- Contact: leedswomeninblack@gmail.com
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/womeninblackleeds/?ref=share>

London - Euston Road

Miri writes: This vigil was started in direct response to the events of 7 October and since in Israel/Palestine. The first was held on 14 October 2023 at the Nelson Mandela Bust on South Bank, but as we were not allowed to continue on this spot which is on private property, we moved to Euston Road outside Friends House, where we now stand every Saturday from 12:00 to 13:00. An average of 40 women attend each time, with 70 our highest point so far, and around 20 our lowest. The vigil is attended by some Israeli and Jewish women living in London, some of whom were part of the original WiB vigils in 1988, or attended vigils during the 90s and 00's in Jerusalem. Women from the Wednesday WiB London vigils at the Edith Cavell statue also join us regularly. Other regular attendees include antiracist feminist and human rights activists and lawyers. Some of us continue on from the vigil to the big Palestine marches as well.

- Vigil: Saturdays, 12-1pm, outside Friends House, Euston Road.
- Contact: miri.weingarten@gmail.com
- Instagram: [women_in_black_london](#)

London – Edith Cavell Statue

Liz writes: Since October 7th there have been three London Women in Black groups (although the Haringay vigil has stopped), so as not to mix us all up I have identified us as the Edith Cavell WiB group.

Between 10 and 20 of us have continued to meet every Wednesday from 6 to 7:00 pm. Our vigils have covered a number of topics including: the continuing occupation of Palestine by Israel; attacks by Hamas; the ongoing war in Gaza; Global Days of Action on Military Spending (GDAMs), which were interactive vigils asking the public what they would spend £56 billion (the UK's spending on Military); International Women's day focusing on violence against women; the arms trade; White Poppy's, (remembrance) linking armed conflict, war and its effect on the environment; give a gift of peace for Christmas; Russian WiBs photo exhibition against Russia's war in Ukraine. *(If you would like to borrow this exhibition contact us).*

Our vigils continue to display large placards that display a clear message to the public, plus a QR code for people to scan. We hand out around 200 leaflets to passersby, often with a petition or letter to send to the Prime Minister and MPs.

- Vigil: Wednesdays, 6-7pm, Edith Cavell Memorial, St Martin's Place.
- Blog: <http://london.womeninblack.org/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/womeninblack.london>
- X (formerly Twitter): @WIB_London

North-East Coast

Anne writes: As Women In Black @ North East Coast we stand with countless women all over the world who seek to end all forms of violence, and assert that freedom, peace and justice go hand in hand. We stand in silence for those whose lives are destroyed by violence, conflict and war and recognise that women and children are often the majority of casualties. We bear witness to the ongoing genocide in Palestine and call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. We are outraged by the violence and atrocities there and around the world and we stand in solidarity with all peoples against war, and the war machine.

We held our first event on 8th March for International Women's Day when over 70 of us gathered for a silent lantern walk from Cullercoats to Tynemouth ending with a human peace symbol on the beach. We made a fire of hope and people spoke, recited poems and sang songs of hope and resistance.

Since then we hold a regular silent vigil by the sea, bearing witness to the ongoing genocide in Palestine, sending our love and solidarity carried on the waves, unrestrained by borders or barriers. Towards the end we make time for discussion, to update on local related activity and plan our next actions. We organise around local events in Newcastle and join with other rallies in the city centre and recently at the 'Shut Down Rafael' rally focused on the State of Israel owned weapons factory in the city, implicated in the genocide in Palestine. Some members are supporters of the Newcastle University 'Apartheid off Campus' Student Encampment.

The group has produced publicity for events and an information leaflet for circulation and to raise awareness. Our Instagram page is in the making.

- Vigil: 10.30-12pm on 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month
- Where : usually on the green next to The Grand Hotel, Tynemouth, NE304ER
- Contact: Anne Marron annemarron31@gmail.com

Oxford

Kathryn reports: Historically the Oxford Women in Black group has been affiliated to NOW, the Network of Oxford Women. There is a diversity of political interests and affiliations among the women associated with WiB, and so -- because the Oxford vigil takes place on a Saturday afternoon -- women as activists are often tugged in many directions. Over the spring many Oxford WiBers have been travelling to London to support the Palestine solidarity marches there. The vigil continues, even with sometimes small numbers, to represent the feminist anti-militarist perspective in Oxford city centre. While continuing to emphasise the merit of anti-militarism as a philosophy, our vigils have reflected the strong feelings of participants in a focus on the specific crisis in Gaza. We are the subject of many photographs by passersby, and we have also had important conversations. We noticed that no-one was interested to receive a leaflet during the covid penumbra, but we are considering making a fresh attempt at offering leaflets!

- Vigil: Saturdays, 2-3pm, on the steps of the Martyrs Memorial in St Giles'.
- Wear black, if possible. All self-identifying women welcome.
- Contact: Carol Stavris, oxfordwib@gmail.com

Portsmouth

sara writes: The monthly Portsmouth vigil continues, usually just one or two women in person overlooking the naval base, supported by others vigilling online in other locations. We focus on a message for peace rather than any specific theme.

- Vigil: first Saturday of the month, 1100-1200, at the junction of Bishop Crispin Way and Alfred Road overlooking the naval base.
- Contact: sarah slcoote@yahoo.co.uk

Shaftsbury – new vigil, started in February 2024

Virginia writes: The sun came out for our third vigil where 6 of us raised awareness for Gaza. And the first chapter of Dogs in Black was formed. Great interest locally with everyone very supportive.

- Vigil: Last Thursday of each month, 12-1pm High Street, Shaftesbury outside Alfred's Kitchen
- Contact: Virginia Moffatt virginiamoffattwriter@gmail.com
- Facebook: Women in Black Shaftesbury

Invitation to an international zoom meeting on June 22nd about the war on Gaza

Time: 2-6.00 pm London time (4-8 pm in Palestine and Israel; 8 am – 12 pm in Colombia; 3 - 7pm in France, Germany, Italy, Serbia, Spain, S.Africa; 6.30-10.30 pm in India – but please check!).

Session 1 The War on Gaza and Palestine: Palestinian Women Speak Out

Session 2 Voices of Women in Black in Israel following October 7th and the war on Gaza

Both sessions will include time for questions and contributions from participants, with a half hour break between sessions. If you would like to join this international zoom meeting please register by emailing suewildfinch@gmail.com. Let us know if you will need interpretation from English for the meeting, and if so in which language.

WiB Book and International Conference

Women in Black Against Violence for Peace with Justice by Cynthia Cockburn and Sue Finch. ISBN 978-0-85036-784-3. This has been an enormous success and led Rebecca, Sue, Heena and Liz to set about organising the next international WiB conference that will

take place by zoom on 31/8, 1/9, 2/9, 6/9,7/9 and 8/9. If you like more information about the Conference, please contact suewildfinch@gmail.com

WiB leaflets and photos

Please remember to visit the page of the UK groups to see recent pics and leaflets:
<https://womeninblack.org/vigils-around-the-world/europa/united-kingdom/>

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