

AGM AND GATHERING 2013

THIS YEAR we are trying something different! Numbers attending the Perth Gathering have been falling recently, and we know it can be a challenge to change buses or trains if coming through Glasgow, so we will be holding this year's event at the Thistle Hotel in Cambridge Street. (It's across the road from the back door of the Sauchiehall Street branch of Marks and Sparks).

We will start the day with a short, formal, AGM, including a talk from Geoff Huggins, who is the man at St Andrew's House leading the Scottish Government team for dementia. This part of the day is free, as all members are entitled to attend, and we hope as many as possible will do so. Next there will be a two-course lunch, followed by an amusing speaker, and musical entertainment. These have not yet been finalised but we hope to reach the same standard - at least - as 2012, when the ex-Captain of the QE2 was such a hit, as was the singer Dennis Alexander.

Branch Secretaries have been sent all the details and will be contacting everyone individually. Do try to come along, it will be a great day out.



Thistle Hotel in Glasgow, venue for this year's AGM and Gathering.

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON CHRONIC PAIN

DO any readers suffer from chronic pain – or know a sufferer? If so, make your voices heard! Lasting pain affects some 700,000 in Scotland, to varying degrees of harm. This is a long neglected NHS issue. Scotland's few specialist day clinics for pain are underfunded and overloaded. So strong voices are needed at the heart of politics. The Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Chronic Pain campaigns for sufferers. It has patient members, carers, lay and professional members (retired or otherwise) apart from MSPs. Meetings are only four times a year, no expenses - everyone is voluntary and can inform MSPs directly on problems. Even if you can't attend meetings –you can give your views and receive information.

Contact the Development Officer if you would like to join the Group.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

27 February 2013

National Council, London

8 May 2013

Federation of Scottish Branches, Queens Hotel, Perth

15 May 2013

AGM and Annual Gathering, Thistle Hotel, Glasgow

22 May 2013

National Council, London

5 July - 8 July 2013

Annual Holiday & Conference, Midland Hotel, Manchester

RECRUITMENT

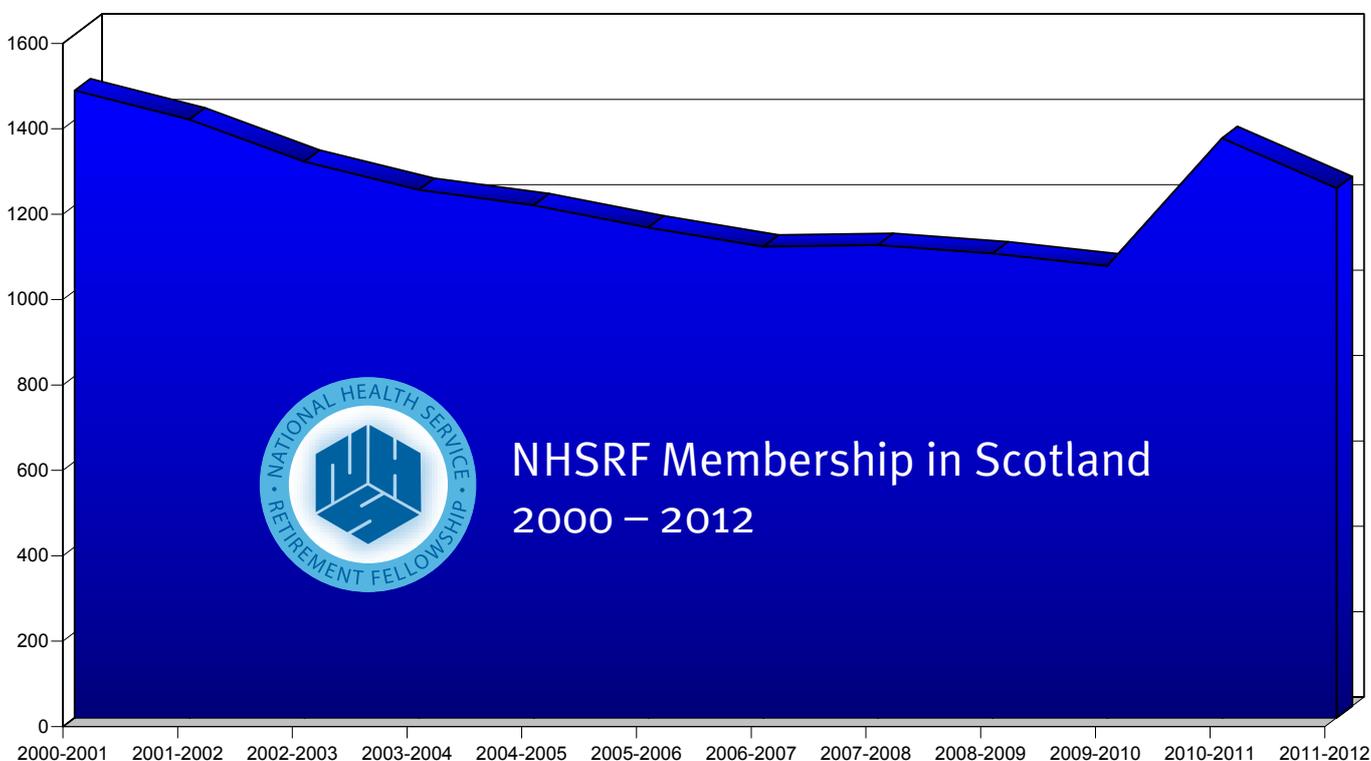
ALL BRANCHES know that recruitment of new members is essential if the Fellowship is not to (literally) die out.

At the start of the 21st century we had 1,469 Scottish members, but by 2008 this had gradually fallen to 1058. A campaign in 2009 repaired some of the damage and we now have 1,240, but another big effort is needed.

The Scottish Public Pensions Agency will circulate material about us to all NHS Scotland pensioners in May this year, but we know that branches tell us the best form of recruitment is local. Last November, we looked at the budget, having passed the half-way point in the financial year, and decided we could afford to give each branch a £250 “mini-grant” to run a local recruitment drive. Just before Christmas was not the best time to do this, we realise (lesson

number one for future years), yet it has been amazing to hear of the creative ideas branches have come up with. These include locally-designed recruitment material, sponsoring a carol at the local Hospitals Carol Concert, a stall at a local Country Fayre, stalls in the foyer of hospitals (one with NHS RF balloons!), Open Days, advertisements in the press, and one branch has begun holding a second meeting each month purely for socialising and handicrafts, in an attempt to “break the mould” and make meetings more attractive. Results of all these initiatives are gradually coming in with one branch reporting a 10% increase in members in only two months, and which included the festive season.

Lesson number one from the 2009 recruitment drive is worth remembering, however. It is the welcome new members receive at branches that makes first-timers decide to sign up or slip away! It can be a challenge to walk into a room full of strangers all chatting away to each other, so a real effort is needed. We know of a branch in the south where they have a member wearing a Miss World-style sash, whose job it is to meet and greet new faces, but it is also up to every single member. Even the innocent habit of bagging seats for pals can mean a new attender does not know where to sit and can be hanging around uncomfortably until they are spotted. In 2013, let us resolve to turn every first-timer into a paid-up, welcome and enthusiastic new member!





DUMFRIES GET INTO CORSETS

Helen Little writes – **OUR BRANCH** went on a outing to the National Museum of Costume at Shambellie House near Dumfries. Sadly the Scottish Government has designated the museum to be closed, much to the disgust of the local population.

Dresses from the 40s to the 50's were on display; they were beautiful creations which evoked many happy memories and some laughter as well!

When we arrived at a room with a rail of garments which could be tried on, we wrapped Linda Duff in a set of burlesque style corsets, which were much too big for her, but we quickly tightened up the laces! We think she looked great and several of us took pictures.

It was a brilliant afternoon, in a wonderful house with a friendly atmosphere taking us back to the past. Later we rested our tired feet and replenished our energy over an excellent supper back in Dumfries.



PERTH & KINROSS VISIT CASTLE HOWARD

THE PERTH & KINROSS BRANCH enjoyed a "Turkey & Tinsel" holiday for five days in December. The branch went to Scarborough including visits to York Christmas Market and to Castle Howard. Sixty members, including five from the Dundee branch, all had a super time.

HIGHLAND CHRISTMAS LUNCH

HIGHLAND branch had Christmas lunch at the Mercure Hotel in Inverness during December. The hotel was generous and charged £13.99 per head so the branch subsidised the event and the members paid £12.00 each. Fifty-three members were expected and fifty arrived; there had been snow the previous day and some members from outlying districts couldn't get into town. Everyone except one person thought the lunch excellent.



Picture - winner Helen Mackay won the raffle top prize which was a hamper.

SING UP, HIGHLAND!

Jeanie Sutherland writes



OUR CHAIRMAN Elspeth McKinlay is a member of the choir “Singing for Pleasure” along with attending piano lessons, supporting her local church lunch club, driving elderly to appointments, fitting in journeys to Edinburgh to see family and friends while also making plans for a trip to New Zealand later in the year. Elspeth is a very busy lady and (as always) very busy people are the ones to ask to do things in organisations. The choir came to our meeting, led by Elsie Normington. Elsie is the events organiser at the community centre in the South Kessock area of Inverness. This is a rather sad place in the city. Poor souls with social problems and many long term unemployed... you get the drift. Elsie has an infectious personality and encourages the community to join her choir. There is a waiting list but she told us don’t be put off if you are a singer. We think she is doing the community a great service and supporting all sorts of organisations, which ‘community’ is all about.

The choir has a very busy schedule and has become very popular, therefore difficult to engage. We don’t think having Elspeth as our chairman and a choir member influenced the acceptance to visit us! We decided to ask Elgin branch to join us. After getting lost in the Raigmore complex they were full of giggles when they finally found the right door to the hall so I don’t think they minded getting lost too much. Attendance was over eighty including the choir. Our hall had never seen so many attending for a NHSRF meeting. It was a jolly afternoon of popular songs including Scottish airs. Some members of the choir did a solo spot and a threesome gave us a comic mime with song. Bringing their own “props” released mirth and giggles from the audience. During the afternoon the choir had us joining in songs. Many said they wouldn’t be singing but one couldn’t help but join in, even those of us who are clearly tone deaf. It was great entertainment.

FROM THE CAPITAL

THE EDINBURGH & LOTHIAN BRANCH was formed in 1981 and there are still some original members on the membership list. Quite a record! At one time there were over three hundred members but over time this has fallen to around two hundred. In about 1985 the branch meetings moved to St John the Evangelist’s Church Hall to accommodate the numbers attending each week and the branch has met there ever since. This is the big church at the west end of Princes Street and is easily accessible for members travelling from all over the Lothians.

Recently the branch was warned that due to modernisation and upgrading plans for the Hall it might be necessary to find alternative accommodation for our meetings. Luckily it has now been learned that planning permission has been extended and there is no urgent need to find new accommodation. Comments and suggestions from members were much appreciated by the Committee, who thank all who replied. The branch activities continue with talks at the Scottish Health Services Centre, and regular weekly coffee mornings at St John’s as usual. Any members visiting Edinburgh will be welcomed to the coffee mornings between ten and twelve on Thursday mornings.

Copies of Scotland’s NHSRF News are posted individually to every member, using the list held by Central Office in Dorset. This means contact details must be up to date for everyone, so please ensure Central Office has an accurate list.

STROKE?

Think FAST & save a life
CALL 999

- F**ace – Can they smile?
Does one side droop? 
- A**rm – Can they lift both
arms? Is one weak? 
- S**peech – Is their speech
slurred or muddled? 
- T**ime – To call 999. 

If you see these signs call 999 FAST.
Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland



The NHS Retirement Fellowship in Scotland

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Never heard of the NHS Retirement Fellowship?

Like to know more?

Contact Maggie (as above) to arrange an invitation from your nearest Branch.