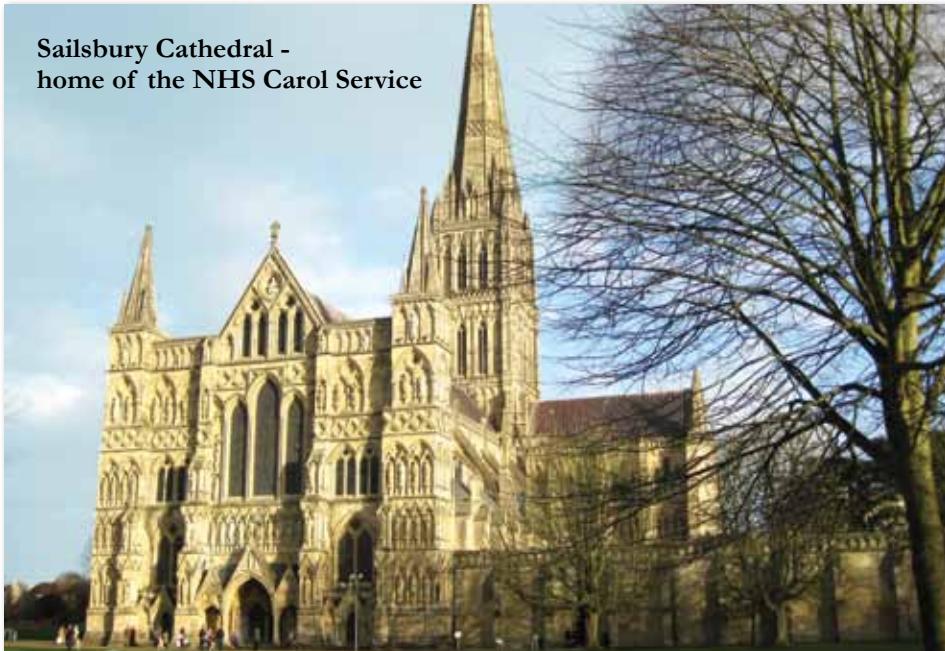


# Fellowship

The newsletter of the **NHS Retirement Fellowship**

April 2012

**Salisbury Cathedral - home of the NHS Carol Service**



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## Inside your 'Fellowship'

National conference features  
“Question Time” panel

**Page 2**

New regional representatives take up their duties

**Page 3**

Salisbury carol service saved by anonymous benefactor

**Page 7**

Book Club launched soon

**Page 8**

up at a meeting and put the Fellowship on the back burner while they get on with other things.

The agency has agreed to send out the flyer again this year – but whereas last time it went to all retired NHS staff, this year it will only go to new pensioners.

New members are critical to the future of the Fellowship and we need to make sure they stay. “Fellowship” will be glad to feature examples of how branches have met the challenge. Please send reports to Sherry Smith at Central Office.

## ‘Fellowship’ issues branch challenge

“Fellowship” newsletter is setting down a new challenge to branches in this issue: tell us how you have responded to the task of welcoming the thousands of new members who joined us in 2011.

Stepping from the world of work – surrounded by younger people – into membership of an organization for older people is a culture shock. It demands a major effort from branches to make new members feel at home.

Last year, thanks to the flyer sent out with pension details, membership overall

climbed by 17% to over 17,000, the first significant increase in membership for more than a decade.

Some branches have come up with innovative ideas for drawing new members into the Fellowship family. They include coffee mornings or a barbecue for new members, or a cheese and wine type event at which committee members get the chance to chat to recent retirees.

But there must be more examples of good practice which we can share so that new recruits are not lost. It is all too easy for new members to join but never show



## Take ten...to give yourself some reassurance for the future.

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# The Director's Column



Mike Brown

**2011 has been a good year for the Fellowship. Before this year we had a dwindling membership and branches closing. We needed to inject new life into our organisation, while retaining all that is best of our branch activities.**

This led to a recruitment campaign through the NHS Pensions Agency and a bid to attract the newly-retired by offering interest groups (golf, photography and book club) and a range of holidays, on top of the excellent activities that our branches organise. We have been able to raise our membership to 17,000, which is a 17 percent increase, as well as opening six new branches, with more in the pipeline.

#### Maintaining the momentum

I would like to maintain this momentum in 2012. We have agreement from the pensions agency to repeat the recruitment flyer to all

new NHS pensioners. This will be a smaller number than casting the net to all NHS Pensioners, but hopefully will attract interest from NHS staff who have just retired.

We know that many branches would prefer to handle the introduction of new members themselves. Experience suggests that the best way to clinch new memberships is to sign them up at the earliest opportunity, before the retiree decides to do other things with their time. Many larger branches are also presented with difficulties in accommodating more members at their meeting venues. I am asking all branches however to do everything possible to welcome and retain these new members in the interests of our Fellowship growing and thriving. This strengthens our ability to focus on improving the benefits to all members.

#### Dignity in care

We have recently been invited by the "Commission on Dignity in Care of Older People" (Age UK, The NHS Confederation, and the Local Government Association) to comment on their report to government. I am in the process of organising for six retired nurses from our branches to read the report and meet with the commission to express their views. The issue of dignity in the care of older people has been identified by our members as a key issue, and will be a major theme for debate at our conference in July.

Mike Brown, Director

## Wales

# Minister presents fourth Fellowship Award

The Hywel Dda Health Board has won this year's Welsh Fellowship Award for exceptional support for retired staff.

Trevor Purt, CEO of the board was presented with the award on behalf of the Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthen branches by Lesley Griffiths AC/AM Minister for Health and Social Services, at a special lunch in the Welsh Assembly buildings in Cardiff in March.

Hywel Dda HB is only the fourth employer to have received this coveted award which was started by the Fellowship in Wales in 2006. It is designed to enable members, and the Fellowship in general, to thank authorities where the employer has been exceptional in support and understanding of the needs of retired staff.

Also attending were Ethel Armstrong NHSRf Chair, Dr. Cynthia Matthews, NHSRf Vice-Chair, Mike Brown NHSRf Director, members of the Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthen branches and members representing branches from throughout Wales.

## Conference weekend still open

**Places are still available for the national conference at Chesford Grange, Kenilworth, Warwickshire from 29 June to 2 July.**

The weekend includes an after dinner speaker on Friday and a dance band on Saturday evening. There is also a trip to Warwick Castle and a coach tour.

The annual conference will include a new feature this year when our Patron,

Ken Jarrold will chair a "Question Time" style debate on the topic of dignity and care for vulnerable and elderly people in hospital and care homes. There will be four panellists and questions from the floor.

The after dinner speaker on Friday is Jill Fraser, a former nurse who is now a journalist and broadcaster on health issues and a successful author. She is one of the people behind "Kissing it better" an on-line "suggestion box" which contains thousands of simple

ideas which can transform a patient's life. She has recently been appointed to the Dignity in Care Stakeholders Partnership Board at the Department of Health.

The Friday to Monday package is £280 for single occupancy and £240 sharing. The day delegate rate is £30. Members interested should contact Sherry Smith at Central Office on 01305 361317.

# New regional representatives

Four new regional representatives have taken up their role as members of national council and promoting the Fellowship in their region. "Fellowship" introduces them:

## East Midlands: Tricia Cornforth

Tricia Cornforth is already a busy person, but she's looking forward to working with Development Officer Lynn Ireland to help build the strength of the Fellowship.

Tricia retired in 2009 after 15 years in the NHS, initially as a nursing auxiliary in the trauma unit at Leicester Royal Infirmary and later as Junior Doctors' Administrator. She joined Leicester branch when she retired and is currently their speakers' secretary.

"I have also got involved in various other things" she said, "like OPEN – the Older Persons' Engagement Network which communicates the concerns of service users to the service providers. It covers any kind of service for older people. Once we find out something is wrong we try to change it."

She is also part of Leicestershire LINK (soon to become Health Watch) and a member of the patient participation group at her local health centre.

Tricia is married, with two daughters (and two grand children), she likes gardening, belongs to a walking group and sings in a choir. "I don't like not being busy" she said.

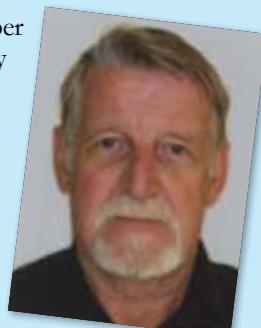


## SE Thames: Frank Pyke

Frank Pyke, from Folkestone, takes over from Tom Owen. Frank was an Operating Department Assistant (today re-named as practitioners) who trained in the Army and later worked at the Brook Hospital in Woolwich and Guy's Hospital in London where he was training co-ordinator for ODAs before retirement because of ill health in 1990.

It wasn't until he moved to the coast seven years later that he even heard of the Fellowship. He spotted an article in the local paper and made contact with Folkestone branch. "Within 12 months I was on the committee and 12 months after that I was chairman" he said. He has been deputy Regional Representative for the past two years.

He's a keen member of his local history society, an avid reader and a busy family man with five children, 10 grand children and three great grand children.



## East Anglia: Margaret Moffatt

East Anglia's new Regional Representative, taking over from Veronica Smoothy, is Margaret Moffatt, a member of Cambridge branch who is well known to members in the region as chairman of the regional forum.

Her NHS career began in haematology where she was initially a Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer (MLSO) at West Middlesex Hospital, testing blood for transfusion, before going to the United States for three years with her husband Tony.

On her return she had 20 years bringing up her family of four children before returning to work at Addenbrooke's in Cambridge as a ward clerk and then later bed manager for the 1,200 bed hospital.



She was "grabbed" by a friend of her husband's when she first ventured to a Fellowship meeting, and found herself on the committee for the next seven years, four of them as chairman.

She is chairman of Addenbrooke's Link Liaison Group, enjoys travel and theatre and spending time with her family, including three grand children.

## Wales: Marilyn Beardmore

Marilyn Beardmore takes over in Wales now that Cynthia Matthews is national vice chairman.

She's a founder member of Gwent branch which started seven years ago and has gone from strength to strength. It now has about 130 members and a busy programme of activities.

"I was chairman for three years and now I am secretary" she said. "We are quite proud of the branch – it took a lot of work at the beginning, but with support from the health authority it is now going well."

Marilyn was a nurse who trained at Cardiff Royal Infirmary and then worked in Accident and Emergency at the Royal Gwent Hospital for 25 years. She is married, with two children and enjoys flower arranging.



## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### Busy Jill writes life story

The story of how Jill Brown's career as a physiotherapist was cut short by a rare muscle disease and how she has since lived a busy life despite increasing handicaps is told in her recently published autobiography "Walking on Wheels."

Jill is a member of Salisbury branch and although she finds it difficult to get to meetings she follows the Fellowship through newsletters.

Her book is the story of a journey from her training at King's College Hospital in London through working in hospitals in Liverpool and Birmingham to the gradual onset of illness which for some time went undiagnosed.

"My health was crumbling and in the event I had to give up work aged 34" said Jill, who is now 70. "It turned out to be a rare form of muscle disease but for a long time it was not diagnosed. At one time doctors sent me to a psychiatrist which made me doubt my own mind, which was horrid. When they did find out what was wrong I realised that I was just going to slowly get worse. But you can either sit and wallow in it, or get on with life. I have been very busy ever since."

Jill took up riding for the disabled and immersed herself in music, yoga, carriage driving (which took her to the United States) and swimming and many other activities, but she had to give up squash, tennis and playing the bassoon.

Today she has to wear splints to support her joints and back and a neck collar. She can't lift her arms and she can't walk very far. But she is still busy raising funds for



charity and living independently thanks to amazing help from her labrador retriever dog Yates who opens doors, fetches and carries, picks up things she has dropped and can even jump up to push the button on traffic lights.

"Walking on Wheels" is published by Hobnob Press (ISBN 978-1-906978-25-9) and is available from bookshops for £9.95, on Amazon, and by post for £11.30 from Jill at 7 St Nicholas Road, Salisbury SP1 2SN. Money from the book will help support Dogs for the Disabled.

### Call the Midwife

What a pleasure it was to see the late Jennifer Worth's book "Call the Midwife" featuring on prime time television. Jennifer was a member of West Hertfordshire branch and we reported on the "favourable reviews" of her book in "Fellowship" in 2005. She went on to write "Shadows of the Workhouse" and "Farewell to the East End" and the TV series draws on all the books. Sadly Jennifer died in May last year.

### Thirty years for Edinburgh

Edinburgh and Lothians branch celebrated their thirtieth anniversary with a cake, an outing to St Andrews and high tea in a hotel in Burntisland. Three of the branch's honorary members, vice president Bill Douglass, Margaret Douglass and Catherine Fegan were able to join in.



Celebrating the anniversary – members of Edinburgh and Lothians with their celebration cake.

### Lynn joins Leicester

Lynn Ireland, Development Officer North of England met several of the organisations working with older people in Leicester when she attended an event organised and supported by Age UK and Leicester City Council.

It was one of a number of events organised during "Older Persons' Month" which has been running in Leicester since 2002. The theme this year covered "Independence, wellbeing, community" and its aim was to raise awareness of the support available for older people.

Lynn had been invited by Tricia Cornforth, speakers secretary, Leicester branch.

"I was able to introduce her to Liz McGregor, the Engagement Officer for

### Welcome to Scarborough Branch

Christmas 2011 brought the Fellowship a very special present in the shape of a brand new branch for Scarborough.

The new branch has already started to make exciting plans and is filling up its calendar of events with great enthusiasm. It includes a trip to the theatre, a flower arranging demonstration, a choral concert and a Christmas decorations/festive demonstration evening. A talk is being arranged about the history of Scarborough.

The branch is certainly a bit different: it meets on the last Sunday of the month in a pub, preceded by a carvery lunch. The committee is organising a huge advertising campaign to recruit new members and will be applying to have a stand at Scalby Fayre in June.

"I am delighted to welcome Scarborough Branch to the Fellowship" said Barbara Broadbent, Project Officer for the North East. "I'm sure members will want to join me in wishing it success in the future."

For more information contact Sandy (Chair) on 07854 226350 or Jan Dyer (Secretary) at jan.dyer@hotmail.co.uk. You can also contact the branch via e-mail scarboroughnhsrf@hotmail.co.uk.

## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### event

Older People who works for Communities in Partnership, the organisation responsible for organising the programme of events" said Tricia. "Liz had received support from the Fellowship which was acknowledged in the information booklet and it was very pleasant to find that many of the exhibitors at the event were aware of us."



Lynn Ireland (left) with Liz McGregor

### Barbecue taster

West Herts branch stage a barbecue every year which they use to encourage potential new members to attend as a "taster" leading to membership.

Last year's event was in Gadebridge Park in Hemel Hempstead and members are captured here through the lens of Sue McLaren "photographer to the group."

"Our group is growing" she writes.

"Outings included a trip on the canal on the Chiltern Countess with cream tea on board and we have visiting speakers, sales and a very enjoyable Christmas party. We meet every month in the lecture room at Hemel Hempstead Hospital."



### Charity choice

East Grinstead branch has sent over £250 to Help for Heroes, their chosen charity for 2011, in appreciation of the work the charity is doing.

Each year the branch invites a guest speaker from a charity to make a short presentation, and then supports that charity throughout the year. This year members are supporting two charities, the National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy and Canine Partners.

### Diamond couple

Fareham branch celebrated the sixtieth wedding anniversary of Rosemary and John Sherren. Rosemary is one of two remaining founder members who still attend meetings.



### Greetings from Melbourne

News has reached us from Melbourne, Australia where Janet Luff, well-known to members as the former Regional Representative for Wessex, has settled in well in a village community.

"Having been here about two years, Rob is on the social committee and runs the bowling events and, after a rest from committee work, I am now on the residents' committee and attend line dancing every week," she writes. "We enjoy living here, we have made some new friends, and we are looking forward to some more exploratory travelling."



Compulsory reading:  
Janet keeps up to date with the Fellowship.

### Fun at North Tyneside



North Tyneside branch celebrated their twenty fifth anniversary with a cake, a tea, and a quiz on silver. "Needless to say there was quite a lot of cheating going on – but everyone had fun" said branch secretary Rosalind Fellows.

Founder members Norah Atkinson, Jean Fairbairn and June Miller at the celebrations.

### NW Surrey see the home of the codebreakers



North West Surrey Branch had a really interesting day visiting the home of the Enigma codebreakers, Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire. The day included a tour by a very informative guide around the pre-fabricated huts where 8,500 people worked during the second world war. There was also time to look around the many exhibitions and collections as well as the Post Office. As the Official Souvenir Guide explains "Thousands of people who worked at Station X (as Bletchley Park was known) did not win the war, but they certainly shortened it"



East Yorkshire Branch celebrated Christmas in style with lunch at a local golf club.

# Obituaries

## Barbara Gibbs

Members of the Harrogate Branch report with great sadness that their president of 16 years, Barbara Gibbs, died in February.

Barbara was born in 1923, brought up on the Wirral and served in the WAAF from 1942-46 in Fighter Command in South East England. She later trained as a mature student in physiotherapy at Bradford from 1959-62 and worked at the Royal Baths in Harrogate until it closed, then in private practice, ending her career based at Harrogate General Hospital.

When she retired she joined Harrogate Branch where her outstanding contribution was as social secretary from 1991-2006. She was chairman from 1995-6 and then president until she died.

Underpinning the whole of Barbara's life was her Christian faith and she was very involved in the work of St. Wilfrid's Church, Harrogate. She loved her home, entertaining, keeping in touch with her many friends, driving her car into the countryside and watching birds. She was a great supporter of the Harrogate Homeless Project. She is remembered with affection and great respect.



## Joan Welfare

Bromley members were shocked and saddened by the tragic sudden death of Joan Welfare. Joan was a health care assistant at Farnborough Hospital and was active in many social events. When she retired she joined the Fellowship and became social secretary. She rarely missed a conference or regional meeting and enjoyed branch outings and holidays. Always happy, a delightful lady, and greatly missed.



## Queenie Spinks

Aberconwy branch regret to report the death of their oldest member, Miss Queenie Spinks, at the age of 102. Although she had spent the last five years in residential care, Miss Spinks retained her membership of the branch and took a keen interest in its activities. She had been Sister Tutor at Llandudno Hospital Nursing School and on retirement she kept busy with the local RSPCA, serving as chairman for a number of years. She was also involved in council work. She joined the Fellowship in 1988 and was a committee member and chairman many times.



## Dr Peter Westcombe

South West Surrey branch in Guildford report with great sadness the death of Peter Westcombe. He was one of the founders of the branch in 1972 and had served as chairman and president for very many years. He made a long and valuable contribution and would graciously mediate over any discord of policy. He regularly supported meetings and events, bravely continuing with the help and support of his wife, Pauline, when his mobility was severely impaired.

In his earlier years Dr Westcombe had served as a General Practitioner before becoming Community Physician for the Surrey County Council, and then for the District Health Authority. Of a modest, kind and gentle disposition, our branch is the richer for the contribution he made and much poorer for his loss.

## Margaret Hall

Folkestone and District branch are sad to announce the death of Margaret Hall.

Margaret was our minutes secretary and a long standing member of the Fellowship. She will be sadly missed.

## Peter Higgett, Jim Aldous and Pat McGovern

Huddersfield branch has lost three members recently. Peter Hisgett was branch chairman from 1989 to 1994 and then president from 1994 to 1997, before failing health curtailed his activities. Peter was formerly the Assistant Hospital Secretary at Storthes Hall Hospital. James 'Jim' Aldous had been a porter at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary before retirement. Both died in October.

Ernestine (Pat) McGovern, the wife of the last surviving founder member (Laurence) died in February aged 94. She had worked as a secretary to the Social Work Department at Storthes Hall Hospital, and was a keen and supportive member of the branch.

## Val Walmsley and Phyllis Whiteside

Chorley and South Ribble members held a short silence at their January meeting to remember two of their members who died recently. Val Walmsley was co-treasurer, a valued and much-loved member who was always willing to help others. She worked as a ward clerk at Chorley Hospital. Phyllis Whiteside, a former committee member and loyal supporter of the Fellowship, also worked at Chorley Hospital on night duty.

## Diana Dalton

Torbay branch reports with great sadness the death of Diana "Di" Dalton, their former chairman and then vice chairman until her death in January, aged 80. Her nursing career began as a mature student in Torbay and Paignton hospitals, progressing to work in theatres in Torbay, Newton Abbott and Mount Stuart. A very special lady and advisor to many of her colleagues.



## Bernard Pye

Bernard Pye, who died suddenly in October was a member of the North Norfolk and Cromer branch for many years and was secretary cum treasurer cum chairman in the last three years before it closed in 2008. He continued to keep in contact with the past members and organised lunches at Christmas and in the summer. Bernard had a permanent companion, Fudge, his dog which accompanied him wherever he went.



## Florence Wilson

Florence Wilson (formerly of Co. Westmeath, Ireland) was a member of Huntingdon branch for 24 years and chairman from 1999 -2003. She gave a lifetime of service to nursing starting in Dublin before becoming Nurse Tutor at the Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast in 1967. Having tutored at Hitchin and The Lister in Stevenage from 1970-1975 Florence went on as Nurse Tutor in the Nurse Training Schools at Huntingdon, Papworth and Addenbrooke's until her retirement in 1987. Since then she has done extensive work in the voluntary sector and Huntingdonshire will be the poorer for her passing.



## Ron Harding

Ron Harding, president of Eastbourne branch for just a few months, sadly died in December. He was a stalwart member for 25 years and chairman for the last 17. His contribution to medicine is legendary – as a young man he became a Fellow of the Institute of Science Technology at the Royal Eye Hospital and spent 26 years there before it moved to the Royal Marsden. He retired in 1987 and settled in Hailsham, Sussex with his wife Joyce. He was greatly respected and his knowledge of many things and his quick wit and stories caused many laughs at branch meetings.

# Benefactor secures carol service

An anonymous donor has stepped forward to save the Salisbury NHS carol service for at least another year after the organisers had warned that costs were rising and sponsorship dwindling.

The service is now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year and is a well loved part of the Christmas season. More than 230 members from all over the south of England attended in December - the largest congregation for a few years, filling the nave of the vast cathedral.

But the organisers had to report that the costs of running the service were now putting its future in considerable doubt – until the New Year brought the news that an anonymous donor had contributed almost half of the cost of the 2011 service.

“It was quite amazing” said Anthea Graham, NHSRF Operations Co-ordinator, “It means that the 2012 service is now assured. We are also establishing *The Friends of the NHS Carol Service*. For a minimum contribution of £30, individuals and organisations can become Friends and will be acknowledged on next year’s Order of Service. If

anyone is willing to help please contact Rosie Pitt Watson on 07889 069825 or by email at [rpitwatson@foliopartners.co.uk](mailto:rpitwatson@foliopartners.co.uk) or write to Rosie at The Larches, St Brides Netherwent, Caldicot, Gwent, NP26 3BP.”

**The service in 2012 is on Saturday 8 December at 3pm.** Reserved seating for large groups will be available. If your branch would like to sit together, contact Anthea Graham by email: [anthea.graham@nhsrf.org.uk](mailto:anthea.graham@nhsrf.org.uk) or telephone 01520 722951



Dr Margaret Abban, Chairman of the new Cornwall West branch, reads the first lesson.

## Progress in the north

**The Fellowship is making progress in the north of England thanks to the combined efforts of local members and the development officer, Lynn Ireland.**

A new branch has opened in Bolton with the full support of the local NHS Trust.

It meets on the third Tuesday of each month and has chosen a town centre venue – the Victoria Hall on Knowsley Street – because it is easier to get to by bus.

Walsall Trust has been very supportive in the development of a new branch

and an awareness session for retired staff was taking place in March.

In Liverpool the local Trust invited staff who have retired in the previous two years to a meeting in the Lecture Theatre at the Royal Liverpool Hospital at the beginning of April to hear all about the NHS Retirement Fellowship with the aim of setting up a local branch.

There are also plans for a similar event in York. If members have any suggestions for new branches in the north they are asked to get in touch with Lynn Ireland, Development Officer for the North of England: [England.north@nhsrf](mailto:England.north@nhsrf)

## Golf tour proves popular

**The Seniors Golf Tour is attracting interest from members and by March there were 25 entrants with more coming in all the time.**

It is being run jointly with the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship with events in Northern Ireland, Scotland, England (north and south) and Wales in May and June, with a final at the Warwickshire Golf Club on June 29.

For information see the NHSRF website or contact John Toman, Oak Cottage, Stoulgrave Lane, Woodcroft,

## Doctor seeks support for Indian charity

**One of our postal members, Dr B K Sharma, has written to us about the work of a children's charity in India that he works with. The charity offers the opportunity for members to undertake voluntary work at its campus in India which includes schools and many other facilities on a 25 acre site.**

“Gwalior Childrens Charity (formerly known as Gwalior Childrens Hospital) is a registered charity in UK working since 1997 to help and provide for poor, disabled and destitute of India through hospitals, schools, orphanages and now its own “Snehalaya” meaning ‘Home with Love’ in Hindi, which is an orphanage or a care home for disabled and destitute children, homeless women and the aged, where they live together as a family” writes Dr Sharma.

“It includes a school for special needs, a mainstream international English Public School and a hospital as well as farms and gardens and other facilities. Snehalaya also works in 43 surrounding villages in rural development including hygiene, sanitation, safe drinking water, vaccination, education and health care.

“The charity depends on volunteers. We need volunteers from all walks of life, who can help us from their own place or by working with us in India for any number of days/weeks/months or years to help train our staff and students and to provide services to the community. Please pass on our message to every one you know and do not hesitate to call me or write to me for further details.” 14, Magdalene Road, Walsall, West Midlands. WS1 3TA. Email: [Gwalior.Hospital@care4free.net](mailto:Gwalior.Hospital@care4free.net) (alternative e mail: [snehalaya.gwalior@gmail.com](mailto:snehalaya.gwalior@gmail.com)) Tel. +44(0)1922 629842. [www.helpchildrenofindia.org.uk](http://www.helpchildrenofindia.org.uk).

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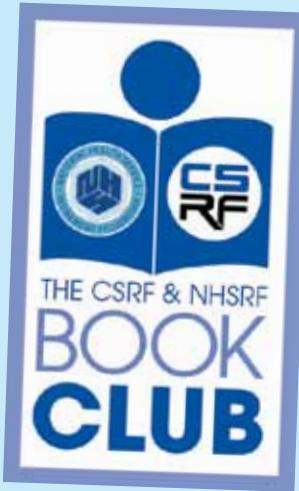
## Book club coming soon

A book club for Fellowship members is to be launched soon in the latest of the partnerships with the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship to create new activities for members.

The club will function on two levels – firstly as an online forum where members of both the NHSRf and the CSRF can share their views and opinions on set books and secondly to provide advice and tips for anyone who wants to set up a book club that could run at a local level.

The main book club website will go live soon. The Book Club page will carry arts and entertainment news, member offers and a chart of the latest best sellers. It will also feature information about literary festivals and events.

Members wishing to register their interest should contact David Tickner the Project Co-ordinator at the CSRF david.tickner@csrf.org.uk or telephone him on 020 8691 7411.



## Phone a Friend pilot - Could you be the first?

Since the last newsletter we have been busy getting together guidelines and tips for the "Phone a Friend" scheme, writes **Chris Iremonger, Development Officer, South of England.**

The scheme is in two parts, one for postal members who don't belong to a branch, and one for branches with members who are unable to get to meetings.

"We are still looking for a branch with elderly members who are unable to get to meetings to volunteer to be the branch to help extend their existing welfare scheme. Is this your branch? Could you offer some members who would be happy to phone other older members who are no longer able to get to meetings?

"There are still a limited number of spaces in the scheme for postal members. We plan to offer to put two people in touch with each other, so

that they can phone or write to each other. We are calling this project Phone a Friend, as we hope that by doing this you will gain another new friend.

Please note, we are not setting up a dating agency!"

Our partners, the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship have developed a similar scheme. For information on either part of the scheme please contact Chris Iremonger on 01209 831636 (or write to Penhale Farmhouse, 17 Penhale Road, Carnhell Green, Cornwall TR14 0LT.)

## Members sign up for photo contest

At least 30 members have signed up for the first NHSRf photographic competition – but there's still time to register your interest.

The competition, on the theme of "active ageing," is being run jointly with the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship.

Information is available on the NHSRf website or from Mik Webb, 18 Rhodfa'r Grug, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, LL29 6DJ. 01492 535781 or email activeageing@btinternet.com

## Holidays Update

The Fellowship's link with Della Holidays is proving popular with members, family and friends who are booking in for the varied programme on offer this year. The holidays are suitable for couples, groups or singles and an ideal way to get to know other members.

Della have had enquiries from many single members traveling on their own and have responded by arranging a "meet and greet" service at airports, boarding the coach or on arrival at the hotel.

### Latest update on holidays is:

- **May in Jersey:** in response to demand from members flights now offered from many regional airports (including Scotland) with no extra charge. Seven days from 7 May. From £468.84 per person.
- **June in Devon:** walking holiday now also offered to non-walkers who would like to stay in Torquay. Coach trip to Dartmoor and boat trip to Cornwall. Walking option still available. Coach pick up London and southern counties. Five days half board from £284 per person.
- **September in the Lake District:** now offered without coach service to allow members to choose own travel. Walking/leisure holiday. Boat trip. Five days on 28 September from £279.70 per person.
- **October in Crete:** originally planned for Sardinia but switched because of costs and flights. Similar format to successful stay in Majorca last year. Full board (including drinks) at hotel 150 yards from beach. Eight days from £589 per person.
- **November and December:** details to follow – river cruises to European Christmas markets, Highland house parties, turkey and tinsel and more.

Details on all holidays on NHSRf website ([www.nhsrf.org.uk](http://www.nhsrf.org.uk)) or from Della Holidays Freephone 0800 216182. Branches are also welcome to contact Della Holidays for other holidays and short breaks.

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