

## Grant cut means new challenge

The Fellowship must re-assess its future after getting a disappointing thumbs down message from Health Education England that it's going to stop the £112,500 a year grant it has paid for the last two years.

"It's very disappointing" said John Rostill, NHSRF Chief Executive. "I understand the challenges they are facing but I had hoped there might be a tapering grant in 2016-17.

In a letter to the Fellowship, Professor Ian Cumming, Chief Executive of HEE says it is not in a position to make a general grant. "We have had a significant real terms reduction in funding and, like the wider NHS, we are having to review all of our financial commitments."

"It puts us in a difficult position – but many charities are facing a similar situation" said John. "We are not being treated any differently from any other organisation and it's unlikely that the government will continue to encourage public funding for organisations like ourselves."

*"The greatest challenge for four decades."*  
- John Rostill



The Fellowship has reserves which will allow it to continue while it undertakes a re-assessment of its future. "It's for members to determine the future format" said John. "Clearly we shall have to do a complete analysis of our financial position and see what we can afford to spend money on. So far the strong message from members has been that we want to remain a national organisation. It's the greatest challenge we have faced in the last four decades."

Sir Keith Pearson, chairman of the HEE has resigned as a trustee of the Fellowship because the two roles create a conflict of interest.

## Have your say at AGM

Members will have a chance to contribute to discussions about the future of the Fellowship at this year's AGM to be held in the International Convention Centre, Broad Street, Birmingham on 30th November.

It's going to be a short sharp meeting, starting at 3.30 and ending no later than 5.30. NHS Providers have generously allowed us to use rooms at the centre during their conference.

"Given our financial position it's important that as many members as possible attend" said John Rostill, Chief Executive. "We have fixed the time so that people can travel off peak"



*John Leighton's striking picture of Liverpool old and new taken on the photography group visit – see page 4.*

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# Exploring the Web and Social Media

*More and more of our members are making use of the internet, some of them for the first time. Anthea Graham offers some useful advice:*

“Most of us with computers, smartphones or tablets use them to shop online, book train or plane tickets and search on the web for information. Members who are not using IT, commonly state concerns about privacy and safety, but there is lots of advice available to steer you safely online.”

✦ Age UK and Age Scotland have excellent factsheets including “Making the most of the internet” and “Staying safe online” and can direct you to their own local computer training classes or online training through Go ON UK and the BBC’s Webwise. Libraries from Cornwall to the Highlands hold computer training sessions as do some schools and colleges. Factsheets are available from your local Age UK / Age Scotland or online from [www.ageuk.org.uk/publications/work-and-learning-publications/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/publications/work-and-learning-publications/)

✦ The NHSRF website ([www.nhsrf.org.uk](http://www.nhsrf.org.uk)) has information about Fellowship, activities and events, holidays, our Trustee Board and National Council minutes, national, Scottish and Welsh newsletters plus documents and information to assist branches.

✦ Our Facebook group ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) and type in ‘NHS Retirement Fellowship’ or click on the Facebook link on the website home page) currently numbers over 300 members and the Scottish Federation and the Photography Group also have a Facebook presence ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and type in ‘NHSRF Scottish Federation’ or ‘NHSRF Photography Group’). The Fellowship has a factsheet “Opening a Facebook account” available from the membership and branch information section of the website, and also of interest, the “Website and Social Media” policy.

✦ For many, one of the main pleasures of using the web is to keep in touch with friends and family, particularly those living afar, through video and voice calls provided by Skype ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)), Apple Facetime ([www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)), Viber (<http://www.viber.com>), Line ([www.line.me/en/](http://www.line.me/en/)), and others.

## Regional representative role adds to Fellowship experience Vacancies in three regions

The Fellowship has vacancies for Regional Representatives in three regions – North East, North East Thames and North West.

It’s a role which members who have been representatives have found enhances their experience and understanding of all the Fellowship does at regional and national level – and helps their contribution to branch activities.

Sue Williams, a retired nurse and founder member of Walsall branch has been representative for the West Midlands since September 2014. Her role has involved communicating national information to branches and branch views to

the national council as well as working with the development officer on new branches and increasing membership.

“I thoroughly enjoy it” she said. “I like the variety it involves and visiting and meeting members from different branches. It has given me a wider depth of knowledge about the Fellowship and how it works, which I feel has made me a better branch officer.”

Members interested in becoming a regional representative are invited to contact Sherry Smith in central office. [Sherry.smith@dhuft.nhs.uk](mailto:Sherry.smith@dhuft.nhs.uk) or 01305 361317.

## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP Competitions and events

Congratulations to Peter Elkington from Cardiff and District branch and John Leighton from the Solihull branch, winners of the two recent competitions. Peter’s picture, “The Old Ways” won the History & Heritage competition, the Christmas competition was won by John Leighton’s “Christmas Star” with Andrew Veal and Michael Turner taking the runner-up awards for both competitions.

Members were inspired by the pictures at the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition in March, particularly those from young people; it looks as if this visit will be a yearly event.

**Pleasure and Enjoyment** is the theme for the current competition. Judges are looking for an interesting interpretation that could include, for example, family, landscape, animals, sport, leisure activities, home or holidays. There will be a prize of £100 for the winner and £50 for runners up thanks to sponsorship from the Civil Service Insurance Society ([www.csis.co.uk](http://www.csis.co.uk))

For more information, see the Fellowship website: [www.nhsrf.org.uk](http://www.nhsrf.org.uk) or contact Anthea Graham, email: [photography@nhsrf.org.uk](mailto:photography@nhsrf.org.uk), tel: 01520 722951

## Age UK reception success

Age UK, the charity with which the Fellowship frequently co-operates, has hosted a reception in the House of Commons for MPs and peers who are “Age Champions.”

More than 50 attended and representatives were able to raise issues such as cuts in public transport grants, the perceived reduction in community care and the closure of small hospitals.

Caroline Abrahams, Age UK’s Charity Director outline the work of Age UK and its partners in helping and supporting older people. She called for parliamentarians to continue speaking up for older people. Over 100 MPs have now signed up to be an Age Champion.



# Heather builds social care links

Heather Whittaker has started a six month project to link with social care organisations to help the Fellowship recruit former social care staff as members.

Heather joins the Fellowship from a marketing and development background which has included working with the Department of Work and Pensions, the Department of Education (where she worked on the launch campaign for the Jamie Oliver healthy school food campaign) and more recently for Sheffield Hallam University and Buxton Opera Festival devising long term marketing and recruitment campaigns.

She started work in June and will be working 15 hours a week until December. "I'm really excited about the project as I'm already finding out a lot about the social care sector and forming some great contacts" she said. "I've got lots of ideas and I hope to share some results of my work in future newsletters."

Heather lives in Trentham, Stoke on Trent with her husband and two young children. "You could say I have my hands full" she said. "I hope to get to as many branch meetings as possible – but please get in touch with questions or suggestions on 07449 0123002 or email [heather.whittaker@nhsrf.org.uk](mailto:heather.whittaker@nhsrf.org.uk). I'd love to hear from you."



Heather with her young family. "You could say I have my hands full"

# Kym's varied background

Kym Billington-Baddley, Development Officer for the north of England comes to the Fellowship from a varied background which includes nine years as a police officer and a 15 year NHS career which embraced primary care management, workforce development and as a senior manager with the Learning and Skills Council.

She is currently a freelance bid writer working with Staffordshire University and social enterprise businesses.

Her role as development officer will aim to grow membership by promoting the benefits of membership and developing relationships with businesses to widen the scope of what the Fellowship has to offer.



Her interests include running and walking, holidays, gardening and reading. She's a member of a church choir and is actively involved in plans for a community café in the local church. She celebrated 25 years of marriage in August.

# Bob starts fund project



Bob Middleton has joined the Fellowship team for a six month project to develop and support the NHSRF Benevolent Fund.

He has recently retired after a 42 year career in the NHS, nearly all of it in primary care management where he has held "a portfolio of roles over decades" involved with change and modernisation in services, mostly in the West Midlands.

He's already begun the task of examining how the benevolent fund works and looking at the potential to innovate and improve. "I am pleased to be able to continue to work in the health ambit" he said. "I don't want to work anywhere else."

Bob lives in Staffordshire with his wife Vickie. They have two children – one a paramedic and one a dental nurse – and five grand children. If you would like to contact him about the benevolent fund he is best reached on [bob.middleton@nhsrf.org.uk](mailto:bob.middleton@nhsrf.org.uk).

# Members days a triumph

Members days – where members from all parts of England are getting the chance to have their say – are proving a triumphant success.

"They have been vibrant" said John Rostill, Chief Executive. "We have had around 100 at each of the days and there's been lots of engagement – and that's what we are all about."

Word has spread already and one of the encouraging outcomes has been that parts of the country which did not have an event scheduled have asked for one – and two more have been arranged in Woking on November 3 and Ashford in Kent on November 15.

So far members days have been held at Birmingham, Exeter, Bristol and Leeds. "I've been delighted by the response" said John. "We have had some frank and honest suggestions. The days have been well worth it – we shall certainly have seen more people than we would have done at a conference. Members have welcomed the opportunity for face to face discussions."

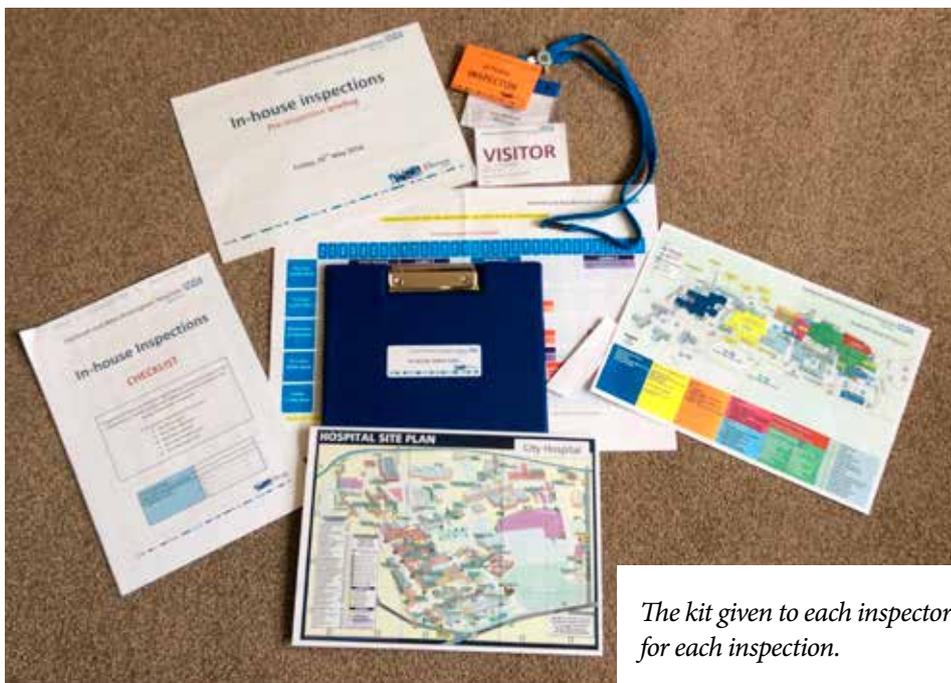
Events are free, with a light lunch, but members fund their own travel. The next one is at Cambridge on 27 September. All run from 12.30 to 3.30.

# Members join inspection visits

Three members from Sandwell and West Birmingham branch and three members from Walsall branch took part in the in-house inspections at Sandwell and City hospitals during May.

Working in teams of two or three, each with a lead clinician, they visited wards of paediatrics, haematology, medicine, surgical assessment, acute medicine, West Midland Poisons Unit and the imaging department.

Members were asked to focus on observational standards, the environment, patients and visitors, using a checklist as guidance. It was an interesting, varied and educational experience which the trust really appreciated.



*The kit given to each inspector for each inspection.*

# Valued members step down

Bexley branch have recorded their appreciation of two members who have retired after much valued service over many years.

Valerie Bamber has been their treasurer for 12 years and the branch praised her hard work and commitment. A former nurse, health visitor and nursing officer, she retired in 1998 and joined the Fellowship where she was “coerced” into becoming assistant treasurer before stepping up to take full responsibility.

Her busy social life includes an interest in wildlife where she shoots and edits her own film – and there are many travel plans for the future.



Tom Owen joined the Fellowship in 1992 when he retired from a career in psychiatric nursing, and soon became vice chairman, organising outings and holidays. He was regional representative for 10 years. His commitment and energy has been greatly appreciated over 23 years as a branch officer.

Tom is closely involved with his church and community and a trustee of the local almshouses. He and his wife Joan are already widely travelled, but there is the prospect of more to come.

# Peterborough honour Keith

Peterborough branch has awarded honorary membership to Keith Smith to recognise his sterling work over many years.

Keith joined the branch when it was formed some 30 years ago and was soon voted onto the committee where he took on most of the official branch posts needed to run the group, including editing the award winning branch newsletter, ending up as president, a role from which he retired in May 2015.

He was the East Anglia regional representative on the regional forum, attended the national conference for many years at times acting as conference photographer. He also used his skills to help set up not only our own branch website, but also helped with the first national site.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the award and Keith was presented with a certificate by the chairman, Dorinda Richardson in April.



# Liverpool hosts photography group

Margaret McKie, Liverpool branch chairperson, welcomed 12 members of the Fellowship’s Photography Group to Liverpool for a special visit which included the chance to photograph some of the city’s famous landmarks.

Members attended from Walsall, Solihull and Manchester as well as local members and Margaret presented the visitors with a commemorative bookmark specially produced by the Liverpool branch.

Thunderstorms had been predicted, but the weather was glorious. The group had a day-long visit to the Albert Dock and the Three Graces, with lunch at the Museum of Liverpool Life.

Photos from the visit were submitted to a small competition and the winner was John Leighton from Solihull for an interesting and well composed picture of the old and the new at Albert Dock, Liverpool. Entries can be seen on the ‘NHS RF Photography Group’ Facebook site.



## Well-deserved medal for Joan Dew

Joan Dew, whose boundless energy and enthusiasm has done so much for the Fellowship and for the League of Friends of Princess Royal Hospital, West Sussex, has been honoured with a further award.



The League of Mercy, which encourages and recognises voluntary work, has awarded her the Order of Mercy, a prestigious medal for her voluntary service over many years.

She received the medal at the Mansion House, London when the Rt Hon Lord Lingfield, the president of the League of Mercy said she was a marvellous example of longstanding voluntary dedication to the service and welfare of others.

Joan was Mid Sussex branch secretary for 10 years and regional representative between 2006 and 2012. She remains an active member of the branch. Chairman David Goodger said: "It is difficult to think of anyone more worthy of an award. Joan deserves our very grateful appreciation for the many hours she has given in her resolve to support the welfare of others."

## David takes on ambassador role

David Hatch, welfare officer for Plymouth branch has been appointed a Mental Health Ambassador for England Athletics, covering Devon and Cornwall in conjunction with MIND, the mental health charity.



This is a new initiative with England Athletics who would like to see an ambassador appointed with every athletics club, but at the moment there are only three in the two counties. David was a technical instructor in psychiatric occupational therapy for 30 years.

## Oxford seize the moment



Branch members with the Oxford exhibit: Frances Fedorovich, Andrew Moss, Dawn McNulty, Dulcie Glassborow, Julie Aikenhead and Cheryl Booth.

"Nursing then and now" was the theme of an exhibition stand mounted by Oxford members at an outdoor event to mark 125 years of nurse education in Oxford.

Branch members, led by chairman Cheryl Booth, seized the opportunity of the event, staged on the front lawn of the Warneford Hospital, to promote the Fellowship and to display memorabilia and photographs from the rich nursing history of many of the branch's former nurses.



The branch has invested in exhibition stands and banners which can be used at future similar events. There was lots of interest in the Fellowship from visitors.

Then and now: Jackie Slay, an Oxford life member.

## Northallerton boost Air Ambulance

Northallerton branch members have boosted the funds of their local Air Ambulance with a donation presented at their meeting in April.

James, from the air ambulance, talked about its work and members learned how it felt to be a patient from Joan who told them about her horrific accident and help from her gallant neighbours and the heroic rescue and transport to hospital by the air ambulance.



James, from the Air Ambulance, Joan, the grateful patient, the secretary and chair of the branch.

## Hastings thank Betty

Hastings and district branch have said a big 'thank you' to Betty Skiggs for the help and support that she has given the branch as chairperson for over 15 years.

Betty has really enjoyed the challenging role but feels now is the right time to step down.

Betty started working in the NHS as a doctors' receptionist after bringing up her family. During the 1980s when the South East Thames Regional Health Authority



relocated to Bexhill, Betty trained as an advisor on the NHS helpline. She retired in 1993 and joined the Fellowship in 1995. The branch has grown over the years, mainly due to Betty's support, enthusiasm and leadership.

# Celebrations

## East Surrey's indoor street party

Forty members of East Surrey branch celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday with a 1950s themed party – a street party indoors.

Bunting, balloons, flags and music of the time created the atmosphere while the showery weather outside evoked memories of the Coronation in 1953. Branch chair Joan Robinson led a quiz based on places and events in the Queen's life. Sherbet dips were prizes for the winning teams.



Members then enjoyed a lunch of egg sandwiches, sausage rolls, corned beef pies, jellies, jam tarts, rock buns and butterfly cakes washed down by orange squash. Another reminder of the 1950s was the raffle third prize – a tin of Spam.

## Ros visits Frimley

Ros Lobo, regional representative for South West Thames, joined members of Frimley and District branch for their AGM in May.



*Mary Slingo, outings and events, Moria Johnson outings and events, Ros Lobo, Anne Stover, treasurer, Rosemary Stanmore, chair and Jo Sallat vice chair.*

## Pontefract knitters

Pontefract knit and natter group meet every week at a local garden centre. They have kindly donated a large amount of wool, which will be knitted and made into blankets and appreciated by abandoned and mistreated dogs in local kennels.

They are also knitting hats, scarves etc for shoe boxes for children in Kosovo and other areas.



## Double celebration



North West Surrey celebrated 30 years as a branch and the Queen's birthday with a buffet lunch after their AGM in May including cakes made by Suzanne - one in the shape of the Queen's hat as worn at Westminster Abbey.

Aileen McLeish, the chairman of the local trust and president of the branch gave an update of developments in local health services.

## Brighton dancers

Members of Brighton and Hove branch got into the spirit with some Breton dancing at their meeting on Bastille Day – July 14.



## Members see statue of nurse heroine

Members of Guy's and St Thomas's branch visited the recently unveiled statue of Mary Seacole, the pioneering nurse and heroine of the Crimean war, in the grounds of St Thomas's Hospital.



## Bradford celebrate with strawberries

Bradford Branch celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday with a home made strawberry tea in June which was enjoyed by 32 members.

Frimley Park members enjoyed a delicious cream tea, celebrating the Queens 90th birthday on a gloriously sunny day.

## Lucky Poole strike it hot



Lucky members of Poole branch chose the hottest day of the summer for a wonderful boat trip up the Frome river to Wareham in July finishing with an excellent fish and chip lunch on Poole Quay.

## Bromley in Devon

Bromley members spent a week at Exmouth in June, mainly in pleasant sunny weather. The days were spent on trips to other resorts and Buckfast Abbey. Some members also visited Exeter, The Donkey Sanctuary, Powderham Castle, A La Ronde and walking the coastal paths.



## Eastbourne in Weymouth

Eighteen members of Eastbourne branch spent a pleasant week in Weymouth when one of the highlights was a visit to Sandworld, with some amazing sculptures eight to 10 feet high.

Branch meetings continue to attract more than 70 members. Visits to Rochester and the RAF Museum at Colindale were planned for the summer.



# OBITUARIES

## Barbara Hewitt

Members of Bromsgrove and Redditch were saddened to hear of the death of Barbara Hewitt, earlier this year. Barbara retired in 1986, as a team leader in the salaries and wages department of the health authority and was an early member when the branch was formed.

She was a hard-working and enthusiastic committee member who arranged coach trips, theatre trips and very successful and enjoyable holidays in Britain and on the continent. She also organised and produced the Christmas socials including pantomime sketches which she penned herself.

## Audrey Andrews

Bromley branch report with much sadness the death of Audrey Andrews, their secretary for nine years until 2015. Before retirement Audrey was a medical secretary at Bromley Hospital.

## Mary Reynolds

Eastbourne members said goodbye to long serving member Mary Reynolds who had been with the branch for over thirty years enjoying the activities and encouraging others. Coach trips were her favourite, and she walked miles with

the walking club. She was a widow from the early days of retirement and put her organizing skills to helping run the Fellowship, becoming a staunch committee member for many years. She will be very sadly missed.

## Eric Lee

Eric was born in Peterborough in 1916 but moved to Billericay, Essex when he was 19 to take up a clerical position at St Andrew's hospital. Apart from the second world war, he worked in hospital administration until he retired at 62. His final working years were at the new Basildon hospital.

After retirement he joined Basildon & Thurrock branch attending meetings when he could and thoroughly enjoying outings. He was fortunate to enjoy very good health and get out and about until well into his 90s, but sadly succumbed to old age shortly before his 100th birthday.

Vic Griffiths, branch chairman said: "Eric enriched the lives of all who worked with him and his Fellowship colleagues. He will be sadly missed, but never forgotten."

## Roy Miller

A long time active member of Chichester branch, Roy Miller, passed away in July. He was in his 90s.

Roy volunteered to join the Navy in 1941 serving in the north sea and taking part in landings in Sicily and Italy. He survived a sinking in 1943 and returned to the UK for the D Day landings, later working in the war office until 1947.

In 1948, he joined the NHS as an administrative officer at the Graylingwell psychiatric hospital in Chichester. When it merged with general hospitals in Chichester he was promoted to the finance department where he remained until he retired in 1983. A caring, supportive member, Roy is remembered with love and affection by fellow members.

## Barbara Trowell

Barbara Trowell and her husband Denis both worked at Peace Memorial Hospital, Watford and then Hertford County Hospital before retiring when they became founder members of East Herts branch.

Denis edited the branch newsletter while Barbara became chairman, which she really enjoyed. She was so well loved that after a short period, she was voted back as chairman. She passed away in March after a short spell in hospital and is greatly missed.

## Parliament visit a hit with Cosham

Cosham branch members shared a wonderful day out when they visited the Houses of Parliament.



"We would recommend anyone who has not been to organise a trip through their local MP. The building is wonderful and you can see MPs passing by who you may recognize, it can be exciting to try and name them. The guide was wonderful and the visit was completed by lunch at St Thomas' Hospital and a talk in the Florence Nightingale Museum," writes member Mary Sheppard.

## Former MP visits East Dorset branch



*Pictured with Dame Annette are Linda Dickins, committee member (left) and Rosemary White, chairman.*

Dame Annette Brooke, who retired as MP for Mid Dorset and North Poole last year, spoke to the East Dorset and Ringwood branch about her life at Westminster.

After a career in teaching she became a Poole councillor in 1986 and an MP in 2001 at the age of 54. She arrived at Westminster with little idea of what to do or where to go. Luckily on her first day she met an ex-marine constituent who was a parliamentary doorkeeper and he showed her the ropes.

She was active in parliamentary groups on topics such as breast cancer, micro-finance and children's issues and chaired debates in Westminster Hall, for example on female clergy but the best thing about being an MP was being able to help constituents with their problems.

# Kingston walkers at the start of something BIG

With the North Downs Way on their doorstep, how could the Kingston branch walking group not take up the challenge of walking the 50 mile section in Surrey?

They couldn't resist it – but it had to be done in stages. So, in May, after preparation with regular monthly walks and, the week before, a final twice up/twice down of Box Hill (no mean feat), the resolute walkers set off from Farnham for the first 11 miles to Guildford.

The group was treated to breathtaking views of beautiful countryside, shared a picnic in a wooded clearing, reached Compton's Watts Gallery for a welcome cuppa, and after the final push to Guildford, the challenging journey ended with well deserved shandies in a typical country pub garden. What aching legs? What sore feet? All forgotten! All so worth it!

Now planning begins again. How to tackle Guildford to Box Hill – some 13 miles? The challenge continues.....



## Members join Mary's 100th birthday party

Four members of the Harrogate Branch were very pleased to join Mary Benoit, her family and friends, to celebrate her 100th birthday.

Mary met Marcel (Benoit), who was wounded in the Free French Forces, while working as a volunteer VAD nurse in World War II and, as she had excelled in modern languages at school, she was able to converse with him.



They fell in love and enjoyed 53 years of happy marriage. They moved to Harrogate in the early seventies to live near their family and, when the Harrogate branch opened in 1982, Mary was the fourteenth member to join.

She took part in branch activities, enjoyed the outings and booked theatre visits for members. She remained a member when she went to live in a care home and finally resigned at the age of 96. She enjoyed the party which was a very happy occasion. Pride of place was a card from the Queen.

## Adam stars in farm park visit



Twenty-nine members of the NW Surrey branch visited Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm Park – and met the Countryfile star in person.

After an interesting and entertaining talk about the history, the family, the animals, the arable side of farming and their vision for the future, members had time to go on a tractor farm safari, visit the touch barn and demonstration barn and see the collection of rare breeds all set in the glorious Cotswold countryside.

The icing on the cake was the arrival of Adam himself, so down to earth and happy to chat and take part in this selfie with member Elizabeth McLachlan.

## North Staffs thank Bill and Ann

Bill Cowen and his wife Ann were feted by North Staffordshire branch at their AGM, when he stood down after 15 years as chairman.

Bill was thanked for his long and distinguished service. Ann was presented with a bouquet and Bill received a voucher for meals and shows at their favourite theatre. Both are continuing as members and the branch is delighted that their knowledge and experience will not be lost. Mrs Janina Watson, the current vice-chairman, was elected chairman.



## Intrepid East Herts

Intrepid travellers from East Herts branch boarded a narrow boat on the Grand Union Canal for a summer outing. There was a bring and share lunch, a demanding quiz and mulled wine. "If you live near a canal" writes branch secretary Peggy Bradshaw, "why not try something similar?"



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