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St George's, Merton and Wandsworth Branch enjoying a jolly good walk

DEAR ALL

Forever Friendship

Well it is now two weeks further on from my last newsletter and I think we have all learned more about the situation we are in, ourselves and friends and family. I remain impressed by the way branches are keeping in touch with members. I have, indeed, had some interesting and rewarding conversations with branch officers over the past fortnight. Friendship and fellowship are two very important things at this difficult time. I am sure everyone will agree with me on this.

What's new this Issue

I am pleased this month to have contributions from Scotland and the South West and thanks to our Chair, Margaret Moffat for her piece. On page 5 there is an article about Anne Watts of Banbury Branch. Anne whose career as a nurse took her to war zones including Cambodia is currently looking into ways that she can help NHS staff currently working in the front line to combat Covid-19. Anne is full of enthusiasm and determination to help where she can and is currently involved with two initiatives, one of these is ScrubHub (see her article for more details). She and ladies from Banbury branch are also helping source 20mm white buttons for a local lady who is making face mask adapters for the Horton General Hospital. Anne believes that many NHSRF members would like to help in some way. So, if anyone has any ideas on this, wants to be involved, or would like to share something they are involved in please do let me know.

I am pretty sure that everyone is doing their best to keep safe. If you are going to the shops for food, I am sure you are taking care. We are continuing to order everything online and so far, so good. We have managed to get delivery slots with much perseverance and with the knowledge that Waitrose and Sainsburys at least are giving preference to the elderly. Those of you who are not leaving the house I do hope that you are trying to exercise as best you can. The Centre for Aging Better issued such advice after Matt Hancock's announcement about the elderly and vulnerable not leaving home to stop contracting the virus. Simple exercises can include sit to stand, wall press ups, side-steps, heel raises and marching. This is all great stuff for both physical and mental wellbeing. Lack of muscle strength and balance can, of course, result in falls.

I just love the photo of all the Easter cards that were sent to Cosham branch members, but may I just remind everyone that this annoying virus can live on cardboard for 24 hours and on paper for around 3 hours so please take care.

My thanks to Annie Johnson from St. George's, Merton and Wandsworth Branch for providing this interesting chart which is included in the most recent issue of their branch's newsletter and submitted by member, Anne Walton



Doctor doctor, they've dropped me from the cricket team - they call me butterfingers

• don't worry, what you have is not catching

Doctor, doctor, can I have second opinion?

• Of course, come back tomorrow!

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF PATIENTS.

How many 'Fs' are in the above. Answer bottom of page 3.

Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK

Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK is a group of volunteers supporting local community groups organising mutual aid throughout the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK. Visit the website to search by location to find what is available very locally. <https://covidmutualaid.org/>

TURN2US

Turn2us is a charity registered in England and Wales, and in Scotland that provides information and support about welfare benefits and charitable grants through an accessible website and a freephone helpline.

I have worked with this charity in the past and can only report what an excellent resource it is.

Editor

www.turn2us.org.uk

0808 802 2000

Margaret Moffat – Fellowship Chair



After spending time as a patient in hospital during my teens, I left grammar school at 17 and joined the Path Lab at North Middlesex Hospital specialising in haematology. I left before finally qualifying in haematology when Tony, my husband, was offered an Assistant Professorship in Houston Texas and I went with him. Whilst there I worked in a Paediatric Practice in their laboratory, taking X-rays and even assisting in the theatre where they performed minor surgery. My time there fully endorsed my admiration of and affection for the NHS!

Returning home I had four children and when in the late 1980s they were growing up and we had moved to Cambridgeshire, I saw an advert for people wishing to return to work from Addenbrookes Hospital offering IT training to those who would like to join the Admin. Bank at the hospital. I worked in various departments in the hospital and the community before becoming the Ward Clerk on the Rehabilitation Ward. Following that, I spent the last ten years of my working life as the Bed Manager at Addenbrookes.

On retirement, I found a note about the NHSRF in my last pay packet, so I went along to be greeted by a friend saying, "You'll join the committee won't you". I did, later becoming Branch Chairman, Regional Rep. and finally having the honour to be elected as the Vice-Chairman and then Chairman for the last three years, of this friendly, caring and supportive organisation.

Margaret

[My thanks to Hilary Robb, Development Officer, for the following contributions from Scotland](#)

News from ScotMessage from your friends in Scotland from Judith McMurray Chair of the Federation of Scottish Branches

This is a difficult time for all of us, but we will get through it together by keeping in touch with each other in whatever way we can. Some of us have volunteered to go back and work on the frontline and I applaud those of you who have, others are volunteering in other ways and it is very much appreciated and on behalf of the Scottish Federation I thank you. Please all keep safe and well and we will all hopefully meet up again on the other side of this pandemic. Take care.

Judith



View of Loch Torridon

In these uncertain times it is good to look forward to holidays later in the year and our branches would like to extend a warm welcome to any NHS Retirement Fellowship member from the South East who is planning to visit Scotland – if you contact Hilary Robb, Development Officer on 0131 333 3699, she can let you know if there are any meetings on. For example, the Edinburgh Branch meets every Thursday morning for coffee in the heart of the city and would love to see you. If you are looking for a holiday with amazing scenery, then you could start your trip in Inverness and come and meet Highland branch members at one of their meetings. More information about the branch is on the website or contact the branch secretary by email: highland@nhsrf.org.uk or telephone: 01520 722951 You will be made very welcome. Hilary

Answer from page 2 is six

Just in case you haven't seen this poem I thought I would print it here for you to read. It was written by Matt Kelly of Wigan



I'll tell you a tale that's been recently written,
Of a powerful army, so Great it saved Britain.
They didn't have bombs and they didn't have planes,
They fought with their hearts and they fought with their brains.
They didn't have bullets, armed just with a mask,
We sent them to war, with one simple task.
To show us the way, to lead and inspire us,
To protect us from harm and fight off the virus.
It couldn't be stopped by our bullet proof vests,
An invisible enemy invaded our chests.
So, we called on our weapon, our soldiers in blue,
All doctors, all nurses, your country needs you!
We clapped on our streets, hearts bursting with pride,
As they went off to war, while we stayed inside.
They struggled at first, as they searched for supplies,
But they stared down the virus, in the whites of its eyes.
They leaped from the trenches and didn't think twice,
Some never came back, the ultimate price.
So tired, so weary, yet still they fought on,
As the virus was beaten and the battle was won.
The many of us, owe so much to so few,
The brave and the bold, our heroes in blue.
So, let's line the streets and remember our debt,
We love you, our heroes, lest we forget.

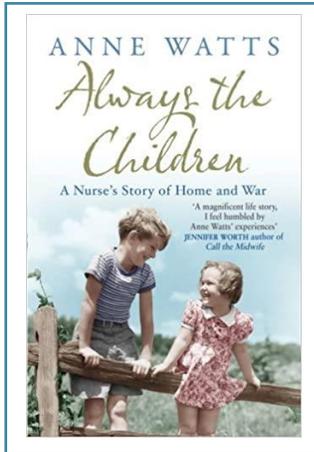
Cosham Branch and Noreen's Wonderful Easter Cards



Earlier this month I asked Paul Pople, Development Officer for SW England, if any of his branches would like to contribute to the next issue of SE News. Paul duly phoned me back to tell me a very nice story about Cosham (Portsmouth) branch.

Following the cessation of branch meetings because of Covid-19, the Branch Executive Committee had concerns about the possibility of increasing loneliness for members, an issue especially for members who live alone. Initially Sandra and Noreen, who share the Support and Welfare Officer role, agreed to phone around every member, to check they were OK, needed a visit/help with shopping and other essential help, and whether they had an appropriate support network in place. With Easter approaching, Noreen then came up with the idea of following up the phone calls, by sending Easter cards to members, with the intention of reminding them they were thinking of them, and hopefully cheering them up, especially those living alone or in isolation.

Noreen makes handmade greeting cards which are normally personalised and sent to members being referred to the Support and Welfare Officers. This endeavour is partly as a hobby and partly to extend her role as Support and Welfare Officer, by supporting members who are unwell or have experienced bereavement. However, as the idea for the Easter cards came to Noreen fairly late in the day and there are around 80+ members in the branch, she found this quite a challenge. However, undaunted, Noreen set about making 83 cards over 4 days, with some late nights and early starts, before posting these out to members in time for Easter. Following this activity, Noreen and the Executive Committee received many phone calls and emails from members thanking them for thinking of them and offering support and encouragement at this difficult time. Like many other groups Cosham are looking forward to re-establishing monthly meetings, but will continue to maintain contact with members, as long as the 'restriction' continues.



Anne Watts – Banbury Branch

Editor

It was a little over a year ago that I took the train from my home in Ruislip to Banbury to help Linda Young set up a new branch of the Fellowship. It was there that I had the pleasure to meet Anne Watts who was just one of the lovely folk that today make up the Banbury Branch. As someone whose career was not in nursing, I found learning more about Anne's story and her challenging and valuable journey through life both fascinating and compelling.

Anne completed her training as a nurse and midwife at Manchester Royal Infirmary in 1961 and went on to work in some of the world's most turbulent war zones from the 1960s through to the 1980s. In her own words 'The thread running throughout my life has been the goodness and decency of ordinary people. It is a humbling and inspiring fact., From the deserts of Saudi Arabia and central Australia and from the frozen Arctic tundra to the Himalayan hill tribes, there is a magnificence in human beings that surrounds us.'

Anne's journey took her on to help war victims around the world, in Thailand, Cambodia, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. Her experiences are recorded in two books, 'Always the Children' and 'A Nurse Abroad'. She is currently writing her third but I understand has some way to go yet. Anne has, she told me, been greatly encouraged by her two sisters and friends to record her life experiences so that others can more clearly understand 'what it was really like'. I personally found reading 'Always the Children' a 'not put downable read' and can confirm Anne's statement about herself and the broad spectrum of her life in the Author's note of her book. 'She may have been Miss, but she didn't miss much!' Now approaching her 80th birthday Anne is still working. She provides live-in care to a gentleman with Parkinson's in Banbury.

In these difficult times Anne is still thinking of the NHS and younger colleagues working hard on the front line. She is keen to help wherever she can and is actively encouraging others to do so. She has recently become aware of Scrubhub, a network of voluntary community groups around the country who love to sew and are making scrubs for NHS staff who are struggling to get them during the crisis. www.scrubhub.org.uk. Anne tells me that she has set up a 'Highlands Hub' with 16 women sewing scrub suits, laundry bags and masks



for local nursing homes and hospices. She tells me that setting up a production line was interesting and hectic but says that it is pretty much up and running now. Anne is keen to encourage any NHSRF members to support in any way they can the local hubs that are in their area. Assistance is required not just with sewing but with general administration as well.

If you would like to know more about Anne's incredible journey through life, please visit www.annewatts.com and/or view www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/brit-nurse-reunited-woman-saved-16199715

And finally, keep well everyone. If you would like to contribute to the next issue or you know of anyone who would like to be added to the mailing list or sent a hard copy then please do make contact via phone 07960 425956 or email london.eastanglia@nhsrf.org.uk

Sally Bundock
Development Officer