

# South West News .....

19<sup>th</sup> November 2020



*DEAR ALL,*

As ever I hope I find you well. Now the nights are really drawing in and I light my woodburner nearly every evening. Given the time of year and the “new” lockdown measures I have again included the simple exercises. Unlike the hedgehogs mentioned further down we are not designed to hibernate and need to keep supple during the winter months.

I am delighted to be able to inform you that in between lockdowns some branches in the South West did manage to arrange walks within the rules and even committee meetings. Unfortunately any plans that were more ambitious were thwarted by the ever changing regulations. There also is a slow uptake on branches using zoom for committee meetings and quizzes. You will recently have had a letter from our CEO, John Rostill which will keep you abreast of the latest developments and I hope that I don't reiterate too much of what he has said. If you haven't received it please let me know.

Have any of you joined in at the Virtual Village Hall? It has “something for everyone” and is well worth a visit.

I would also like to thank Christine Wadsworth from Yeovil Branch for sending a very interesting contribution.

Although many of you will have met me over the last three and a half years some of you won't and so I have taken the liberty of writing a piece about myself.

I aim to publish a Christmas edition of this Newsletter and would really like it if branches could give me something to include in the form of a Christmas “card” to the other branches. If you request me to I can also post them on the Fellowship Facebook page (which now has nearly 1,500 members). It would be lovely if we sent Season's greetings to each other and the rest of the Fellowship. They can be simple, funny, artistic, a winter picture of a local landmark anything you like. For obvious reasons I need to receive them at least a week before Christmas.

Best wishes,

*Paul Pople*



Here is the link to join it – you may need to cut and paste it into your browser.

<https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/virtual-village-hall/?fbclid=IwAR0hGLajzQ6zSNEiQh11yOB7YfGKFWf92DVSAjCOptNJCHcZv-HFS5oXQZ4>

## MIRTHY TALKS

These talks have attracted nearly 1,000 members with an average audience of 3-400. I have watched several and can highly recommend them.

Registration couldn't be easier just visit [www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF](http://www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF) If you have any difficulty with this at all please contact me. **The live chat starts just after 10.45am with the talk starting at 11am.** This together with the Q&A session after the talk makes an enjoyable experience. The next 2 talks will be:

**1st December - A Christmas entertainment**

**15th December - Tis the season to be jolly**

Replays are now available on demand, but you have to register and a confirmation email with a link to join the talk live will be sent. Once the talk has finished, this same link can be used for 7 days to watch a replay of the talk on demand. This overcomes the difficulties of some of our member who routinely had other commitments on Tuesday mornings.

## DAILY EXERCISE

# 1



### How can I make it more challenging?

When you can do this with ease, try using your arms less, and work towards not using them at all.

### SIT TO STAND

Sit up tall near the front of your chair. Place your feet slightly back and hip width apart. Lean forward slightly and stand up – using your hands on the chair if needed. Stand tall then step back until your legs touch the chair. Slowly as you can lower your bottom back into the chair – using your hands on the chair if needed.

**Repeat 10 times.**

This will strengthen the muscles in your thighs and bottom.

# 3



### How can I make it more challenging?

Try to use your support less.

### TOE RAISES

Stand tall with your feet hip width apart. Hold your support if needed. Slowly lift the front of your foot so that the weight is back in your heels. Try not to stick your bottom out. Aim to lift for a slow count of 3 and lower for a slow count of 5.

**Repeat 10 times.**

This will help to strengthen your ankles and shin muscles.

# 5



### How can I make it more challenging?

Try walking backwards.

### HEEL TOE WALKING

Stand tall side on to your support. Walk 10 steps forward placing one foot directly in front of the other so that your feet form a straight line. Look ahead and aim for a slow steady walking action. Only hold on if you need to. Take your feet back to hip width apart before turning and slowly turn towards your support.

**Repeat the steps in the other direction.**

This will help to strengthen your ankles and improve balance.

# 2



### How can I make it more challenging?

Try to use your support less.

### HEEL RAISES

Stand tall with your feet hip width apart. Hold your support if needed. Slowly lift up your heels, keeping the weight over your big toes. Try not to lock your knees. Aim to lift for a slow count of 3 and lower for a slow count of 5.

**Repeat 10 times.**

This will help to strengthen your ankles.

# 4



### How can I make it more challenging?

Try to use your support less and hold the position for longer.

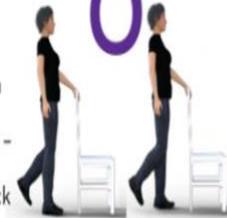
### HEEL TOE STAND

Stand tall with your feet hip width apart. Hold your support if needed. Place one foot in front of the other so that your feet form a straight line. Look ahead and balance for 10 seconds – without holding on if possible. Take your feet back to hip width apart. Repeat with the other foot in front.

**Repeat twice on each foot.**

This will help to strengthen your ankles and improve balance.

# 6



### How can I make it more challenging?

Try to use your support less and hold position for longer.

### ONE LEG STAND

Stand close to your support and hold on. Balance on one leg, keeping your supporting leg straight but your knee soft. Stand tall and look ahead. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with the other leg.

**Repeat twice on each foot.**

This will help to strengthen your ankles and legs and improve balance.

## HELPING OTHERS?

A American student wanting to earn some money, decided to hire himself out as a handyman-type and started canvassing a wealthy neighbourhood. He went to the front door of the first house and asked the owner if he had any jobs he wanted doing. "Well, you can paint my porch. How much will you charge?" The student said, "How about 50 dollars?" The man agreed and told him that the paint and ladders that he might need were in the garage. The man's wife, inside the house, heard the conversation and said to her husband, "Does he realize that the porch goes all the way around the house?" The man replied, "He should. He was standing on the porch." A short time later, the student came to the door to collect his money. "You're finished already?" he asked. "Yes," the student answered, "and I had paint left over, so I gave it two coats." Impressed, the man reached in his pocket for the £50. "And by the way," the student added, "that's not a Porch, it's a Ferrari."

## PAUL POPLÉ – YOUR DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



I started life in what was Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe but when it became dangerous my parents returned to the home counties. After school I went to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and spent 20 years as an Army Officer which took me as far West as Belize and as far East as Brunei. I have very fond memories of the former, diving on the reef, discovering Mayan ruins and desert islands just as a child imagines them. Living in a “3<sup>rd</sup> world country also had its moments. One night when I was Duty Officer for the HQ I despatched a helicopter to a small jungle settlement to bring out a man with a partially severed arm and take him to the only hospital in the country. All went well and the aero-medics assured me that he was delivered in a reasonable condition and should be ok. The next evening I made a courtesy call to enquire about the outcome to find out that he had died! Somewhat surprised and alarmed I asked why. “Ahh man, we couldn’t find de key to de blood-bank.”

I also saw service in Northern Ireland and the First Gulf War – the one I think of as the legitimate one as Iraq had invaded a sovereign nation and refused to go home. We asked him to leave any which way and in the end had to evict him but for very good reasons did not pursue the matter into Iraq. That was where I saw the most awesome sight of my life. You may remember seeing the oilfields of Kuwait blazing away on the news. It is one of those things that pictures cannot do justice to.

You had to be there - flames quite literally as far as the eye could see. It wasn't confined to well-heads but vapour escaping would suddenly ignite and the flames although always there were never still. Hundreds of square miles of desert alight with the whole sky blacked over for months.

This brings me to the birth of my Son, Bertie. Bless him but he has made me very well acquainted with the NHS. I'll start by saying that he is now 26, a very happy young man, living in fully supported accommodation that "touch wood" has remained Covid free. I don't want anyone reading this to worry that there is an unhappy ending. Bertie was born in the British Military Hospital, Rinteln – North Germany. A day I will never forget. I had come off an Army exercise to be present at his birth which, although full term, we were advised to do by C-section as he was abnormally small. Healthcare professionals you may be but I don't want to get too graphic here – he was a mess! Sufficiently so that I found myself in GOSH by 6 o'clock that night, a story in itself how we got there even though we nearly got turned back whilst high above the North Sea. After many weeks he was diagnosed with Wolf-Hirschhorn (4P-) Syndrome. GOSH had patched him up neatly and everything was now in the correct place but his life was under immediate threat because of his size (or lack of it) which was not helped by him having no sucking/swallowing reflex and he had multiple holes in his heart, We later discovered that he would grow abnormally which would require correction.

I wangled a posting back in UK, Winchester, where I was responsible for a the communications architecture, security and one of the 3 certifying officers for a £500 million project to put a mainframe computer and terminals around every British Army Barracks in the World then connect all of them securely to Bicester and Worthy Down (as well as each other). The Army's first email – it wasn't in the project specification but I noticed that it existed in the office automation software that was installed but had been turned off! I turned it on again. I'm very proud of the project as it was on time, to budget and with capacity and functionality exceeding the initial project requirement – almost unheard of in the MOD. My boss even got the OBE! During this time Bertie's heart was patched up at Southampton, literally – they used irradiated ox heart – we had 2 daughters and Bertie had his first fit.

In order to gain Bertie continuity of care I left the Army and started as a Technical Project Manager for Racal Electronics. After a couple of years I couldn't do that any longer and give the level of care/number of trips to hospital (long and short) I needed to for Bertie and so for the first time in my life was not salaried – EEK! I managed my way around that by joining the buy to let bonanza at the start of the century and picking up part time jobs including a year with the NHS as Project Manager for HOPE (Hospitals in Europe). An interesting project which sent @30 healthcare professionals from UK to work in various different European Locations for 3 months and dotted a similar number of Europeans around hospitals in UK. Each had to give a presentation at the end to the rest of the project, their UK employer and their European employer with the aim of sharing ideas and practices from around the EU and utilising the best of them.

I was looking for something similar when I found the Development Officer Position with your Fellowship some three and a half years ago. It has been great pleasure to meet so many of you and even attend 2 conferences which, if you haven't been to one, I can heartily recommend. My "patch" runs from Portsmouth (where the trust insist they are not in the SW) up to Swindon then diagonally across to Cheltenham then just follow the border around Cornwall back to Portsmouth.

As well as my day a week for the Fellowship I help with Riding for the Disabled and am a walk leader with Walking for Health. I have 2 working dogs (more walking) and we have been out working 4 times this year in October with plenty more planned. I also sing with various choirs, enjoy fishing, skiing and have been learning to play bowls.

I have been very indulgent and have included a picture of the dogs on a sunny day on Dartmoor, I hope you like it and it reminds you that summer is not that far away.





# Noah's Ark Complaints Department



YOU ONLY  
BROUGHT  
TWO ANTS?

## A MESSAGE FROM CHRIS WADSWORTH

### **Biodiversity**

I saw David Attenborough's documentary "Extinction" and since then I've read his book, "A Life on our Planet. My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future". Both are revealing and a worry.

In 2019, with the support of the UN, over 500 scientists set out to investigate the current state of the natural world. Extinction is happening up to 100 times faster than the natural evolutionary rate and one million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction. Everything in nature is connected in networks that support the whole of life on earth and we are part of that.

David Attenborough says the loss of our planet's biodiversity, barely noticeable from day to day, is committing the earth to failure. He says we are driving its loss by regarding the earth as our planet, run by mankind, for mankind, and there is little left for the rest of the living world. We are not, as we believe, detached from biodiversity, we are part of it. Our needs are becoming unsustainable, our wellbeing is at risk and he questions if we are sleep walking into catastrophe.

1937 World Population 2.3 billion

Remaining wilderness 66 per cent.

Carbon in atmosphere 280 parts per million.

2020 World Population 7.8 billion

Remaining wilderness 35 per cent.

Carbon in atmosphere 415 parts per million.

2100 World Population. A UN projection suggests between 9.4 and 12.7 billion.

Evidence suggests that if the right choices are made, at this critical time, nature can bounce back and with the right motivation profound change can happen in a very short period of time.

But we need urgent action from policy makers, business, communities and every individual.

So, what can we do?

We know this crisis threatens food and water, control of our climate, and puts us at greater risk of pandemics such as Covid 19. There has been much said about energy and water, greenhouse gases, recycling, plastic, palm oil, the list goes on, and the internet is full of ideas from leaving part of the garden as a wilderness to opting for a cardboard coffin.

But in particular we can spread the word, by talking to our family and friends and neighbours and our children, especially our children. They are bright, and sponges for knowledge, and they will be shouldering our planet's problems long after we're gone.

When David Attenborough was asked what his priority was and he said "don't waste".

So, we could start with Christmas, a time when many of us buy too much, regardless of family gathering size. Will we eat all those groceries? Do we want so many presents? Some of us are still trying to get through last year's lotions and potions. Many of us remember Christmases past when we didn't have nearly as much, and we didn't feel deprived, indeed many of us have said they were happier times. So, we can buy less and save time and money, and the planet, and still be happy. It would be a good end to a difficult year and a good start to perhaps a better year ahead.

Science has spoken, there is hope for our world, if we help. Happy Christmas. Chris Wadsworth. X



Late one night a burglar broke into a house and while he was sneaking around he heard a voice say, "Jesús is watching you." He looked around and saw nothing. He kept on creeping and again heard, "Jesús is watching you." In a dark corner, he saw a cage with a parrot inside. The burglar asked the parrot, "Was it you who said Jesús is watching me?" The parrot replied, "Yes." Relieved, the burglar asked, "What is your name?" The parrot said, "Clarence." The burglar said, "That's a stupid name for a parrot. What idiot named you Clarence?" The parrot answered, "The same idiot that named the rottweiler Jesús."

A priest, a minister, and a rabbi want to see who's best at his job. So they each go into the woods, find a bear, and attempt to convert it. Later they get together. The priest begins: "When I found the bear, I read to him from the Catechism and sprinkled him with holy water. Next week is his first communion." "I found a bear by the stream," says the minister, "and preached God's holy word. The bear was so mesmerized that he let me baptize him." They both look down at the rabbi, who is lying on a stretcher in a body cast. "Looking back," he says, "maybe I shouldn't have started with the circumcision."

There is a deliberate mistake in this edition. I wonder if you have spotted it?

As ever I welcome any feedback and or contributions. Please do get in contact if I can be of any assistance.

Stay safe and well.

*Paul*

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