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Dear All - It is wonderful to think that we are now moving towards Spring and that the snowdrops, crocuses, and daffodils are all around us. It certainly helps to raise our hopes for a better year this year than last. Infection numbers are falling, and vaccination numbers are rising and with luck branches will be able to resume meeting in the summer. It is hoped to hold our annual Conference and AGM event in Manchester in October and management is currently trying to assess how many people would like to attend, Covid-19 permitting. I, for one, hope to be there and to be able to meet up with everyone.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – GWEN HARRIES - SOUTH MANCHESTER BRANCH

Hello, I was born in Bridlington, East Yorkshire; my birth name is Gwyneth, suggesting that I might have some Welsh in me. In fact, a recent DNA profile shows that I am 54% Welsh about which I feel quite proud! My mother was from Yorkshire and a teacher and my father who was an Optician came from South Wales. Very sadly, when I was 7, my dear father was killed in a road accident; my little brother and I really missed him, and my mother had to work as there were no benefits for single mothers in those days. She took on a bookseller's and newspaper business and made a good success of it, being at the seaside. Most of my father's family were teachers and tried to persuade me to be a teacher, I was having none of it; my passion was to become a Nurse. I trained at Scarborough Hospital from 1953, but my real passion was to become a midwife. Off I went to the Jessop Hospital in Sheffield as soon as I could to do Part 1 Midwifery and to Epsom District Hospital in Surrey for Part 2 and became a qualified Midwife in March 1958. I absolutely loved it and took a Staff Midwife post at Hope Hospital in Salford as it was then called and was soon promoted to be a Sister there. I discovered there that I really enjoyed teaching the pupil midwives, so in 1960, I went to Southmead Hospital in Bristol to do the Midwife Teachers Diploma - no signs of University training then. My friend and I attended weekly lectures, studied hard and we were both successful in gaining our Diploma in March 1961.





During all those years, another friend and I used to go on hiking holidays; we'd go for 2 weeks at a time all over England, Wales and Scotland. It was during a time in Scotland that the weather had not been good, a sickness bug had passed through the Houseparty that, in a tearoom in Glasgow on the way back home, we were fed up and said 'Let's go to Australia'!! By this time, I was working as a Midwife Teacher in Wakefield, but didn't like it. I reverted to being a Sister in Bridlington and made extensive plans to go on the £10 passage with my friend as an emigrant to Australia.

We set sail on the P&O liner 'Strathmore' on March 7th, 1963 to Melbourne and worked as Midwives at the Royal Women's Hospital. It was all very exciting! I remember thinking that while Australia was a long way off from England, England didn't seem half so far off from Australia. I used to stand on the balcony of the 6th Floor Labour Ward (when it wasn't busy, but it was

always very busy!) watching the sun go down and thinking it's going off to England!! I did a lot of Night Duty there and I'd go on duty at 11 p.m. and the one big Labour Ward (with 7 cubicles in it) was full of women all shouting and screaming in labour. These were mainly Jewish ladies who didn't like pain; it was my first encounter with epidurals for pain relief! As it was a training school, we had to teach the student midwives and the medical students only the ONE way of delivering babies - ladies had to be in the left lateral position for the 2nd stage (the Rotunda Method) and woe betide you if you didn't. The Senior Midwife used to stand at the desk in the middle of the ward and she knew precisely what was going on behind all those curtains!! It was while I was in Melbourne that I became a Christian and had some wonderful holidays with the Australian Nurses Christian Movement. Of course, I wanted to see more of Australia and so I went on the Pioneer Coach Tours during my 4 years to all parts of the country; New South Wales, Queensland Darwin, down the Birdsville Track to climb Ayers Rock (now known as Uluru, and sacred to the Aborigines) and Radio School of the Air, on to Coober Pedy and the Opal Fields as well as Adelaide and Tasmania. We had so many wonderful experiences and I made lots of friends, many of whom I correspond with now.

I then (1964) worked as a Sister in the Chesalon Nursing Homes for the Elderly, run by the Home Mission Society of the Church of England in Sydney, where we enjoyed so much fun! I learnt to drive and then went on the Community. I remember going to one old lady who needed her leg bandages changing. As I took the bandages down, out would jump all the fleas!! I discovered mint was the thing to put round your waist in bed to get rid of them! After 2 and a half years at Chesalon, I completed 6 months night duty at the Royal Brisbane Hospital working in the psychiatric and prison departments as well as the surgical wards; the big ceiling fans were going all night long as it was so hot.

Sadly, in 1967, my mother became seriously ill and I knew I had to come home. My brother met me in Southampton off the 'old' P. & O. liner 'Oriana' and drove me up to Bridlington, encountering a new phenomenon - a Motorway!! After that, I helped my mother with her business while working on night duty in the local maternity hospitals. She retired and moved to a new house, I then went on to be a Midwifery Sister at the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies in South London.....to be followed by a long (40 years) experience of depression.

I coped outwardly, moved up North in 1971, worked as a Midwife at Wythenshawe Maternity, then as a teacher, eventually in the Manchester College of Nursing and Midwifery, retiring in 1995 having seen the 1st group of the 3-year course through. I wasn't going to start a degree course then!

Looking back, I truly believe that I have had a very happy life. The seat of my depression though, in part, lay in the fact that I didn't get married and have children and that God had let me down. Following much therapy, I'm now in the very happy place of acceptance of all that I was and am, living in a block of flats where I am now a Director of our Freehold Company. I never thought I would be so captivated by housing, but it's been almost a life saver in having been so pre-occupied with it since 2000!

In the meantime, I've loved the idea of travelling since Australia and have visited many places – Europe, China, Pakistan, Toronto, Zimbabwe, Israel and Ohio. I also continue to go rambling, to the gym, try to learn a bit of I.T. and Family History. In between these activities, I had a quadruple by-pass at M.R.I. (didn't I notice a massive difference in nursing then?!) in 2007 and 2 major abdominal ops in 2014 & 2015 following a major infection obtained in Zimbabwe.



I would still like to holiday in South Africa, the Golden Triangle in India and see something of the west coast of America.....it may be too late! Just dreams!! I've been fine during lockdown but am so looking forward to meeting up with all my friends again. I am so grateful for all the way my colleagues supported and helped me over years and I thank them with all my heart.



Remember replays are now available on demand. Assuming you have registered for a talk you will receive a confirmation email with a link to join the talk live. After the talk has finished this same link can be used for 7 days to watch a replay of the talk on demand. Registration is easy - please just visit www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF and you will get an email with a link to click at the start of the talk. The next talks all starting at 10.45am are

as follows :

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| 6 April | Thirty Years of Travel in China – Chris Forse |
| 20 April | Santa Evita – Hazel Griffiths |
| 4 May | Endangered Wildlife and Conservation – Shelly Lozano |
| 18 May | Eyam: The Plague Village – Chris Green |



Our vision is that health and social care will be delivered in a way that meets every person's health and social care needs. Our mission is to give effect to the patient voice, to improve patient experience and support people to engage fully in their own care. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is entering a more hopeful phase, with case numbers falling and vaccinations being rolled out, we still want to hear about your experiences. This includes both recent events and anything you want to share about what's happened over the last year. Our survey is still live, and we will use what you tell us to follow up our Pandemic Patient Experience report of last year. Whether you responded previously and would like to update us on how you have found things since then, or if you would be telling us about your COVID experience for the first time, please click through and take the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SZQWRKY>



Wordsworth in Lockdown

I wandered lonely as a cloud,
Two metres from the madding crowd,
When all at once my name was called
To enter Waitrose hallowed hall.
This was the pensioners' special hour
I'd gone to get a bag of flour,
But I forgot - when through the door -
What I had gone to Waitrose for?
The Waitrose staff are extra kind
I told them it had slipped my mind,
They asked what else I had forgot
They clearly thought I'd lost the plot.
I phoned my wife again to ask
She reminded me of this special task
"I need some flour to bake a cake
With all that cream you made me take!"
"Ah yes, I recall" I had to lie,
I dared not ask what flower to buy,
But then I saw them at the tills
A bunch of golden daffodils.

NHSRF Benevolent Fund

- ❖ We can help with replacement home items.
- ❖ We can help towards the cost of wheelchairs or other aids.
- ❖ We can help with some health and convalescent care.
- ❖ We can help with home changes such as stair and bathroom rails.
- ❖ We can help in many other ways.

[Contact Central Office for more information](#)

Comedy quiz

1. Who played Gunther in Friends?
2. In which year did the original UK version of The Office air?
3. What was legendary comedy actor Oliver Hardy's real first name at birth?
4. What is Sheldon Cooper's one-word catchphrase in The Big Bang Theory?
5. Name the five ingredients demanded by one of Basil Fawlty's guests to make the infamous Waldorf Salad.
6. Complete the name of the classic British sitcom: Steptoe and [blank]
7. Who played the Prime Minister, Jim Hacker, in Yes, Prime Minister?
8. What was the name of Ronnie Barker's character in Open All Hours?
9. Who plays comedy character Alan Partridge?
10. Name the characters played by David Mitchell and Robert Webb in Peep Show



1st April marks April Fools' Day, an annual custom on April 1st consisting of practical jokes and hoaxes. Jokesters often expose their actions by shouting "April Fools!" at the recipient. The custom of setting aside a day for playing harmless pranks upon one's neighbour has been relatively common in the world historically. April Fools' Day is celebrated all around the world. Here are some examples:

In **France**, the fooled party is called the poisson d'avril, which literally means "April fish." France's customary prank involves pinning a paper fish to a friend's back.

In **Scotland**, April Fools' Day was traditionally called Gowk Day—gowk being another name for the cuckoo, a common symbol of the fool. Pranks continued into April 2, Tailie Day, when celebrants traditionally attach a "paper tail" (or a "kick me" sign) to their friends' backs.

Brazil celebrates April 1 as Dia da Mentira, or "Lie Day," in which people try to fool their loved ones.

Silver Voices has campaigned strongly in recent years over escalating funeral costs and the ways in which bereaved families can be exploited. Common complaints relate to the value-for-money of pre-paid funeral plans, where individuals pay for their funerals in advance either by lump sum, or instalments, usually for peace of mind and to ease burdens on their families when they pass away. This is a huge market, with an estimated 1.4 million unused plans in existence and 165,200 new plans sold in 2019 alone. The market in pre-paid funeral plans has been unregulated, subject only to voluntary oversight by the industry, so we are delighted to learn that from July 2022 all plans will be subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and any customer disputes can be referred to the Financial Ombudsman. All funeral plan providers will have to be registered with the FCA and meet certain conditions to ensure they can deliver what they promise. Because of our track record on this subject, the FCA is consulting Silver Voices on their plans for regulation. The consultation document is available here: <https://www.fca.org.uk/publications/consultation-papers/cp21-4-funeral-plans-proposed-approach-regulation>



If you have detailed comments on these proposals which have not been mentioned above, please email the office by replying to this Briefing and we will look to include your views in our response. **Please respond by 5 April** so that we can meet the FCA deadline.

General Knowledge Answers Feb Newsletter

1. 7
2. 100 degrees centigrade
3. Amazon
4. A female deer
5. Mount Everest
6. 100
7. Norwegian
8. London Heathrow
9. Prince Charles
- 10.13

And finally, don't forget this is **your** newsletter so we want **your** stories, anecdotes, thoughts. If you do have a contribution but haven't got anything typed up just give me a ring and I can type this up with you over the telephone - call 07967 489162 or email northwest.England@nhsrf.org.uk - Karen North West Development Officer.