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## Mirthy Talks



DEAR ALL

## Every Cloud has a Silver Lining

Yes, it's a catchy phrase isn't it and I guess for many of us in this strange situation we find ourselves in, it is to some extent true. If I try to ignore all the bad news, then looking on the brighter side I feel we have all benefitted from lower pollution levels across the world in the past weeks. The sky is bluer, and the air is fresher. My house has never been tidier, without the grandchildren who we have missed, and the garden has never been so well tended. I have caught up with some friends on the phone who I have not spoken to for a while. I have also had the opportunity to re-read some books I enjoyed in the past as the library is, of course, closed. It has by no means been good for many people, but we have I guess all learned something from the experience.

## What's new this Issue

With a decline in the number of infections and loss of lives, we are now experiencing some easing of our personal restrictions. There is some light at the end of the tunnel so to speak. Of course, it is up to each and every one of us to decide our own personal way forward. At the time of writing I still do not leave the house without my mask but then I do live in London.

I continue to work with branches and colleagues to support the Fellowship. If anyone needs any extra personal support or who knows of someone who does please do make contact.

## Update on live talks – 240 members registered for 2<sup>nd</sup> June

I enjoyed the talk by Neil on Gongoozling on Tuesday, especially as I have never actually set foot on a narrow boat. It was good to hear from some members, including Margaret, our Chair, that they have enjoyed narrow boat holidays in the past. Lots of very positive comments received as for the previous talk. Please do think of joining us on 16<sup>th</sup> June if you have not taken part yet. To register please go to [www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF](http://www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF) If you have any difficulty with this at all please contact me. The next 3 talks will be:

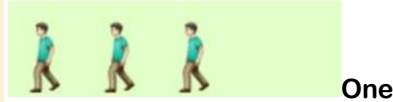
**16 June – 11am** Bruges, it's more than just chocolate - Melanie

**30 June – 11am** My Poisons – A darkly humorous look at 19<sup>th</sup> Century Medicine

**14 July – 11am** Travels with a penguin to Antarctica - Pen

## Food and drinks emoji quiz

Can you name these big brand names?



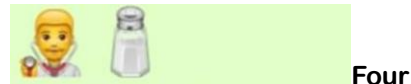
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Two



Three



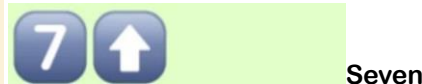
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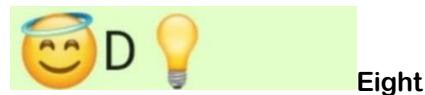
Five



Six



Seven



Eight

Answers in next South East News

## And for future holidays....

Just a reminder that NHSRF has teamed up with cottages.com and Hoseasons to bring you a great 10% discount on all UK breaks! cottages.com boasts over 15,000 properties in the UK, France, Italy and Ireland and as a member of NHS Retirement Fellowship you qualify for a 10% discount across all properties in this huge collection.

Discover secluded hideaways for romantic getaways, coastal cottages for that family holiday, superb castles and manor houses in the Highlands for friend and family gatherings and there's even some amazing villas with pools throughout France and Italy!

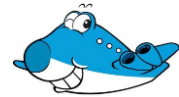
To book your perfect cottage visit:

[www.chooseacottage.co.uk/NRF](http://www.chooseacottage.co.uk/NRF) or call us on 0345 268 1595 and quote PART10

Or perhaps a lodge break is your idea of heaven? There are hundreds of locations all over the UK selected by experts with over 65 years of experience so you can book with absolute confidence.

To book your perfect Lodge break visit:

[partners.hoseasons.co.uk/NRF](http://partners.hoseasons.co.uk/NRF) or call on 0345 498 6258 and quote NHSRF



"This is your pilot speaking. I'm working from home today!"

Ahhh! .....

## THE QUARANTINE IS OVER!

### Now how we gonna get out?



My thanks to Annie Johnson for this delightful contribution



## George Kempton, Vice Chairman

Just like our Chair, Margaret, the first of my several different careers in the NHS started in Pathology. Having left Grammar School at 17, I started work as a student M.L.S.O. (Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer) in the Pathology Department of the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester. Diagnostic pathology was still an emerging science where Laboratories it was believed pathology should be hidden away from public view. True to form the main pathology department at Winchester was located in the dark subterranean depths of the hospital's basement.

In those early days laboratories still resembled school science labs with racks of test tubes containing liquids of varied hues and simple single eye piece microscopes. Automated analysis was still very much in the future with blood cell counts still being performed by eye; literally counting the red and white cells seen with the use on the monocular microscope.

After 3 years at Winchester I spent a short time in the laboratory of the Lord Mayor Treloar Orthopaedic Hospital, a wonderful environment as it had an amazing sports and social club, outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts and badminton and snooker halls. Sadly, all now gone and, in its place, a big housing estate.

From here I made the short journey to Farnham Hospital where I stayed for 10 years, responsible for running the chemical pathology lab. It was here that I became involved in helping to run induction programmes, advising on professional courses run by the local colleges and creating a management development strategy for health care professionals. This resulted in a secondment to a defunct organisation, The National Health Service Training Authority (N.H.S.T.A.), where for my first 3 years I developed and managed the General Management Training Schemes based in several English Universities.

A couple of degrees later, still with N.H.S.T.A. I was Asked to develop National Occupational Standards, initially for Health Care Assistants and then expanded further for Health Care Professionals.

Another secondment followed, this time to Kingston Hospital, where I became head of training and joint lead for a DoH project known as Patient Focussed Care. During this time, I also undertook several consultancies on behalf of N.H.S.T.A. and in conjunction with a couple of universities explored the opportunities for expanding professional roles in health care and further develop the use of National Occupational Standards. I eventually retired from the NHS but continued with the consultancy work both nationally and internationally for another 10 years working in a number of developing countries.

I have been very privileged to have had so many opportunities to make a difference to the delivery of health care both in the UK and internationally. I am passionate about the quality of care our health professionals provide and believe we are so fortunate in the UK in having one of the best health services.

George



### Interesting Fact About the World

**Africa and Asia are home to nearly 90 percent of the world's rural population.**

Not everyone lives in a booming city or sprawling suburb. Many people still make their homes outside of bustling locations—especially in India, which has the largest number of people living in rural areas (approximately 893 million people live outside of the city), according to *Reuters*. China also has an impressively large rural population, with 578 million living outside of major centers.

## *A Blast from the Past*

### Roger Stokoe, NHSRF Director 2000-2006



Roger with two NHSRF colleagues in 2005

Twenty years ago, I was appointed to replace the courteous, kindly and hardworking Roger Titley as the Director of the NHSRF, when the Central Office was based in Stoke Mandeville Hospital. This was far from straightforward because Roger and his staff of two, including his wife Heather, who did the books and the administrator, all part time, decided to retire en masse. Cutting a long story short, it was decided to move the office to Charminster, where the local Trust quickly became Central Office's friendly and helpful landlords.

Staff were needed to replace the previous team and the first person I interviewed in my dining room was Sherry Smith, who I recall was the benchmark for all those being interviewed for the administrator's post. Sherry's commitment, lateral thinking and hard work proved invaluable to me over the next six years and I do not know what I would have done without her unstinting help. I am not the only one who thinks that - Sherry does too! Kay was appointed as the financial administrator and her first task was to change the accounts from a handwritten ledger book (completed for several years in Heather's copper plate writing) to an IT based system called Excel, which will be known to many members. No easy task, but it was accomplished within a year. Sherry and Kay were later joined by the equally committed Lucy and that part time trio has served the Fellowship for nearly 20 years. They are now on their third chief who, I believe is a great compliment to the Central Office team.

Early problems were caused by moving an elderly computer from Aylesbury to Charminster because, little did we know, the move corrupted the membership data base, which caused quite considerable disruption and angst. Another early issue was applying for section 64 grants from the then DoH. Thankfully, the application was successful, and the Fellowship was able to appoint two part time Development Officers for England with Scotland and Wales quickly following suit. Some have moved on, but names which will be familiar are Anthea and Bryan Noke in England, Ken Thomson in Scotland and John Toman in Wales.

I enjoyed a very happy and rewarding six years as Director of the Fellowship with a great team, wonderful Hon Officers at national and branch level and invariably got a very warm welcome from members at the Annual Conference and when I visited branches. Twenty years have seemingly passed very swiftly which is, no doubt, a function of getting older.

Long live the Fellowship!

Roger Stokoe

*My thanks to Roger for this interesting piece of history about the Fellowship. The 'girls' at CO remember him well!*

*Ed*

### Interesting Facts About the World

The population of the world has doubled since 1970.

All giant pandas in zoos around the world are on loan from China.

More people speak Mandarin Chinese than any other language. 你好 = Ni hao = hello!



Around one in every 200 men are direct descendants of Genghis Khan.



## And Across the Pond in the good old US of A

Ahhhh!

A lady rushes into the veterinarian and screams, "I found my dog unconscious and I can't wake him -- do something." The vet lays the dog on the examination table and after a few simple tests he says, "I'm sorry, I don't feel a pulse, I'm afraid your dog is dead". The lady can't accept this and says, "No, no, he can't be dead -- do something else."

The vet goes into the other room and comes back with a little cat. The cat jumps up on the table and starts sniffing the dog from head to toe. It sniffs and sniffs up and down the dog, then all of a sudden just stops and jumps off the table and leaves. "Well, that confirms it," the vet says, "your dog is dead." The lady is very upset but finally settles down. "Okay, I guess you're right. How much do I owe you?" The vet says, "That will be \$340."

The lady has a fit and asks, "Why is it so much? After all the vet didn't do anything for the dog."

"Well", the vet replied, "it's \$40 for the office visit and \$300 for the CAT SCAN!"



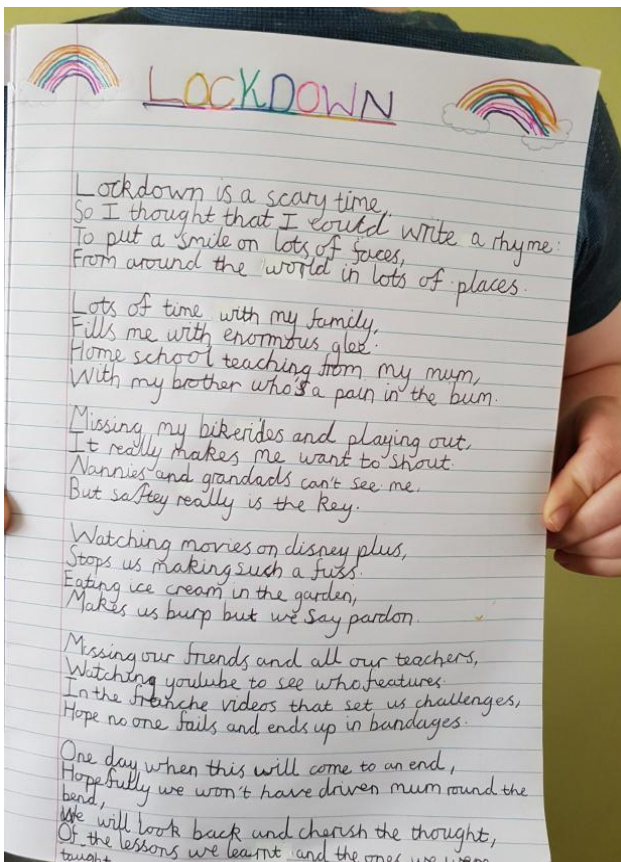
### What is Call in Time?

Call in Time is a free telephone friendship service for people 60 and over. We'll match you up with a likeminded person who's keen to make a new friend, and every week they'll give you a call.

Visit [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Or call 0800 678 1602

Not having someone to talk to regularly can be lonely, particularly if you're used to sharing your home and time with others. A friendly, 30-minute chat on the phone every week can make all the difference.



Franch Primary School student aged just 8, Devon Simkin-Samways, spent two days writing the poem, entitled 'Lockdown', in the hope of bringing joy to all who read it.

I expect many of you have missed seeing your grandchildren. My husband, Frank, and I normally look after our 2 granddaughters (aged 6 and 2) two afternoons a week. We now see them briefly and talk from a distance which is nice but, of course, not the same.

Ed

## Whittington Branch History

by Maureen Cronin

It all started in November 2016 when a number of retired staff were invited to a meeting at the Whittington Hospital. Vic Griffiths, Vice President, and Sally Bundock, Development Officer, were present and keen to encourage a branch of the Fellowship to be set up and offered their support. The Whittington Trust was willing to provide a room free for meetings. On the day 5 members volunteered to take on the roles to form a committee. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 we officially became a Branch.

We are a small branch currently comprising 14 members. Like many branches we do not find it easy to recruit new members. We have tried posters and leaflets, but success is mostly by word of mouth. The majority of our members have a long service with the NHS; Manju has dedicated 50 years of her life to it. We increased our committee members to 7 but our Vice Chairman, Dr Ramesh Sharma, sadly died suddenly in January and is greatly missed by us. He played an active role and was respected by all.

We meet once a month and also have a day out. We are fortunate that our chairman, Michael, has a vast knowledge of London and the surroundings. He arranges all our outings and has managed to access those with little or no cost involved, as our branch resources are small.

We have enjoyed visits to the London Children's Ballet, Tate Modern, Maritime Museum, Royal Institute of British Architecture, boat trip to the Thames Barrier and the Design Museum.



One of our favourite places to visit has been Walthamstow Wetlands which is one of the largest urban wetland nature reserves in Europe and is particularly important for wildlife a byway for migrating and breeding birds. It also has two significant Victorian buildings on the site, the Coppermill and Marine Engine House. It is well worth a visit. A guided free tour is available and the guides are knowledgeable and most helpful. We have enjoyed a meal at the nearby Ferry Boat Inn after our visits.

We consider ourselves to be lucky. When we turned up for our first Christmas lunch the fire brigade were present dealing with a minor fire, we were asked to come back the next day and were treated to free meal and drinks. When we completed our branch profile for Sally, we were drawn for the £100 prize.

We have attended the Fellowship AGM/Conference for the 3 years as a branch. Last year 8 of us went to Coventry and stayed the extra night. In the Newsletter competition we received a "HIGHLY COMMENDED CERTIFICATE".

We look forward to progressing as a branch and sharing and enjoying many more happy events when lockdown is over and Covid-19 is no more.

Maureen

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](mailto:london.eastanglia@nhsrf.org.uk)

Sally Bundock  
Development Officer