



In this issue:

1. **What a Wonderful World**
2. **Update on live talks**
3. **William Withering and the Foxglove – Sheila Sheppard**
4. **Fairly Easy Quiz**
5. **An August Meeting – Joan Walker**
6. **Member's Book Choice**
7. **Garden bits and pieces**
8. **Details of next Live Talk**
9. **Quite a variety of silly jokes and bits and bobs**

DEAR ALL

What a Wonderful World

Well I realise I am repeating myself with this statement, but I really wanted to say how impressed I was with the programme – Prince William: A Planet for Us All – shown on TV recently. If you missed it, you could always try to view it on BBC iPlayer. Well worth spending the time. It followed on wonderfully from David Attenborough's programme – Extinction: The Facts. I have a mental list of men I would like to have lunch with, and David is on that list. Some, like Steve McQueen, are unfortunately no longer with us. William is on the list now too of course. This list is, may I state, merely for their conversation of course!

After my message in last issue's editorial to spend what time we have carefully I have been trying my best, well almost my best. Anyway, I think I have made some progress and I hope that some of you have too.

The 'numbers' unfortunately continue to rise and so Frank and I are keeping ourselves to ourselves but continuing with our long walks. I am back out running now (but nowhere near as good as Bob Middleton) and have chosen a new route which is some road and some park. Lovely.

Do try to keep well everyone and keep focused. These are difficult times but together we will get through.

Update on Live Talks

Nearly **1,000 members** to date have taken part in one or more of our Mirthy talks. Live chat starts just after 10.45am with the talk starting at 11am. This together with the Q&A session makes an enjoyable experience.

Breaking News - Replays now available on demand:

Assuming a member registers for a talk they 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. This means that anytime within those 7 days members can watch the talk again.

Registration is pretty 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. Details of the next talk are shown on page 6 of this newsletter. The next 3 talks planned are:

20 Oct. – 10.45am Sentenced to 'Beyond the seas' – David Clark
3 Nov. – 10.45am Goose Grease and Brown Paper – Kath Reynolds
17 Nov. – 10.45am We Can't Let you Broadcast That – David Clark



“William Withering and the Foxglove” – Sheila Sheppard, Brighton Branch

In May this year when Lockdown restrictions were easing, I arranged to meet a friend from Brighton & Hove City Branch NHSRF in Preston Manor walled garden in Preston Park. When I arrived at the garden my friend was already there. She told me she had been counting the wildflowers and found over twenty. I explained that in the past many of the plants growing there had been used for medicinal purposes. I added, the Apothecary to King George IV was buried in the nearby churchyard of the 13th Century St. Peter’s Church. One of the plants growing was the foxglove, it seeds itself and comes up every year.

Three years ago, whilst enjoying a pub lunch with my husband Peter, I came across the name of William Withering. There was an article in a Wetherspoon’s magazine which had been laying on the table. They have a Shropshire pub named after him.

William Withering FRS (17th March 1741 - 6th October 1799) born Wellington, Shropshire, Physician & Botanist. He trained as a physician & studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh Medical School. He also worked at Birmingham General Hospital from 1779. Having an interest in botany as well as medicine, he met an old lady in his village who practiced as a folk herbalist. She was successfully treating “dropsy” (oedema caused by congestive cardiac failure) with a herbal brew. By the process of elimination, he learned that the active ingredient was from the foxglove plant, Digitalis. He went on to publish his work and discovery.

The medication Digoxin given today to patients with atrial fibrillation to slow and strengthen the heartbeat, is a derivative of the foxglove plant. Digoxin was one of the first drugs I learnt about when I began my nursing training in 1967.



Ed: My thanks to Sheila for yet another delightful contribution to South East News.

Fairly Easy Advertising Slogan Quiz Answers in the next issue



“Loves the jobs you hate”

One

“So good the cows want it back”

Two

“Full of Eastern Promise”

Three

“The world’s local bank”

Four

“One slice is never enough”

Five

“Afore ye go”

Six



Interesting fact: One of the key reasons behind the reverence reserved for Volkswagen’s ‘Think Small’ TV campaign in the 1950s is the fact that, somehow, the brand succeeded in making a car that had been designed for Adolf Hitler a huge, era-defining success in the USA; a country at the time still heavily involved in rebuilding Europe after World War II. That’s the power of advertising.



Royal Berkshire Branch

A successful indoor August meeting

by Joan Walker

Joan was very pleased to report in her August Branch newsletter as follows: *“Initially it appeared that our branch meetings could cease for the rest of 2020 but with the relaxation of restrictions it became possible to undertake a risk assessment at the church hall, in conjunction with the risk assessments that the church had carried out. The hall was approved for use by 30 people with social distancing. With our membership currently at 29, suddenly there was light at the end of the tunnel for us to meet again.*

Your Committee was consulted and agreed that we should offer members the chance to meet in August, and, if successful, continue with our monthly meetings.

What a joy it was when 20 or so members came to the August meeting on a day which began fairly warm and sunny. With all windows and doors open in line with directives some members were feeling a little chilly by the end of the meeting but nevertheless, a good time was had by one and all.”

Together with my husband and good friend, Val, I enjoyed a visit to this branch at the beginning of the year. Little did we know what lay ahead. Joan's hoped for September meeting did not take place but when I spoke to her this morning, 1 October, she informed me that the branch was soldiering on with committee members keeping in touch with members via the phone and email and some perhaps meeting in twos and threes.

Joan reported that at the August meeting a remarkably interesting talk was given by Karen and Brett Wiles

1940's BROWNIES - World War Two (WW2) 1939-1945

Displayed at the front was a poster which said, “Doing their Bit, Life on the Home Front and Let's go Forward Together”. There was also a life size model of a Brownie in a 1930s uniform which shows she had a special badge showing she was at the coronation of King George V1. There are only 3 of these badges in existence.

As the Glen Miller tune 'In the mood' was being played the talk got underway as to how women and children were used during the war years. When it came to the Brownies then we heard part of the 'Run Rabbit Run' song.

A group photograph of Brownies was shown taken in around 81 years ago and if there are any survivors from the picture, they would be over 90 years of age We then listened to part of the then Prime Minister Mr. Neville Chamberlain's speech to the nation.

What life was like then? – in 1939 there were 500,000 Boy Scouts most of them joining up for war service. At that time there were 750,000 girls used for war service effort from the Brownies, Girl Guides and Rangers. They were the second largest female force only being topped by the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) with whom they had a close relationship. A picture was shown of the world's most famous Brownie, HRH Princess Margaret. Various different pictures were displayed of Brownies at camp.

Air raids becoming more and more so Anderson Shelters were constructed where people went for shelter coming out after the all clear was sounded maybe to find their home damaged or destroyed. Gas attacks were common, and the warning was an exceptionally large, loud rattle followed by gas, 'GAS' being shouted by wardens around the streets and when the attack was over then a bell would be rung. Everybody had to carry their gas mask with them all the time even at the seaside and tiny babies had to have them as well, an example of which was on display for us to see.

What Life Was Like?

No Television, internet, computers, mobile telephones, and computer games instead families listened to the radio, made their own music, and played games. There were no indoor bathrooms, toilets were usually at the bottom of a garden and a potty was often used indoors, wash days were Mondays and that took up most of the day. At school children had Air Raid practice and as well as some lessons knitting was taught with school usually ending at

lunchtime. Children played marbles, ball games, skipping, go carts and reading each other's comics. Children left school at 14 to start full time work.

Girls wore skirts and blouses or dresses, definitely no trousers, but they had to wear hats as it felt incorrect not to wear them. Girls were taught in lessons to sew and knit so they could make some of their own clothes. During rationing then 66 points were given to spend on clothes per year with Girl Guides having extra 10 for uniform.

King George V1 did not like the idea of his daughters having to wear thick brown woolly tights with their uniform so the princesses were allowed to wear knee length socks. This caused controversy within the Brownie and Girl Guide movement so then all members could wear socks. In 1941 white short socks were allowed as they did not use so much material.

In 1939 there were 3.5 million children and invalids who needed to be evacuated and the RVS and the Women's Institute (WI) did play their part along with the Girl Guides who rode bikes and took messages. 26 hours after the help was needed half million were ready to be evacuated.

Due to many Brownies being moved from their homes most of the Brownie packs in towns and cities closed but new packs were set up in different areas and these were swamped with requests to join. Many Brownie and Guide leaders had left for war work so other leaders needed to be found. Kinder Transport – European Refugees helped to settle foreign refugees and Brownies were often used for the part they could play with knowledge of other languages. It is known that an 8-year-old girl was taken from her foster parents to help with a Russian lady who could not speak a word of English during childbirth as well as others needing help. It was 3 months before her foster parents could find her.

In June 1940, all Guide publications were lost due to a fire so much social history has been destroyed. If a girl wanted to be a Brownie, she had to be 7-8 years old before she could join. She had to show she could wash up tea things, plait and fold her tie. If she could do these then she was allowed to carry on with her application by learning the fairy ring dance, do good turns, smile and salute, learn the motto, the law and the promise. If she could do all these then she was given a Brownie badge.

Getting ready meant polishing the brass badge, leather belt and shoes, wash hands, face, clean nails, wear Brownie knickers (Brown Owl inspected to see if knickers were worn as girls were made to do handstands against a wall) no holes in socks or missing buttons, brush hair, have a handkerchief and 1 penny for subs.

Guiding was a particularly important National Service which collected over £46,000.00 in the Guides Gift week. They raised money by collecting and selling firewood, put on concerts and shows, selling knitted items including dish cloths doing odd jobs and helping at fetes. Some of the money raised bought ambulances, a lifeboat later used in the D Day landings, 2 air ambulances, 2 mobile canteens, army rest huts, and an Icelandic hut.

The Brownies also collected wool caught on wire and bramble which was spun to make knitted items, moss and when dried out it was packed into bandages giving them a low Ph level and used by front line staff. Collection of foxgloves, jam jars, wastepaper, rubber, and kitchen waste to feed the pigs. In 1999 when MI9 details came off the Secrets Act it was discovered Brownies had helped by collecting cotton reels and in all they collected 43,000 of them. The cotton reels were holed out and filled with many different items including maps, money, pen nibs and other useful items to help our prisoners of war in a bid to escape. The reels were put in Red Cross parcels and sent off monthly to camps. The Germans never suspected what was inside the parcels. The RAF used the reels to help keep the aircraft cables taut.

Special War Training included putting out fires, regular gas mask checking and training, perfecting carrying messages, use of semaphore, Leadership skills and emergency preparation so they were always ready to cope. The words to the song 'Lend a Hand' was shown as more pictures were shown Dig for Victory, Harvesting, Tea making and shopping.

More pictures were shown of various packs during the war years and the changes that were made to the Brownie badge. Members were invited to look but not touch the items displayed on the table, these included a baby's gas mask, a large selection of badges, a wash tub and board and literature.

Ed: *This article was well worth reading. So, thanks Joan. Lots of interesting material.*

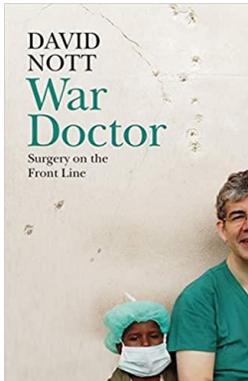


Member's Book Choice Sheila Sheppard, Brighton Branch



War Doctor by David Nott

For more than twenty-five years, David Nott has taken unpaid leave from his job as a general and vascular surgeon with the NHS to volunteer in some of the world's most dangerous war zones. From Sarajevo under siege in 1993, to clandestine hospitals in rebel-held eastern Aleppo, he has carried out life-saving operations and field surgery in the most challenging conditions, and with none of the resources of a major London teaching hospital.

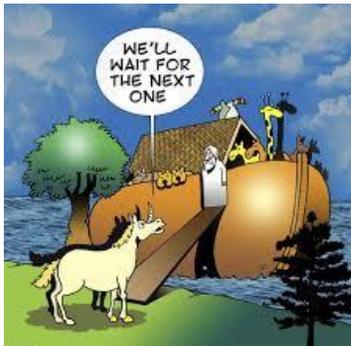


The conflicts he has worked in form a chronology of twenty-first-century combat: Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Darfur, Congo, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Gaza and Syria. But he has also volunteered in areas blighted by natural disasters, such as the earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal.

Driven both by compassion and passion, the desire to help others and the thrill of extreme personal danger, he is now widely acknowledged to be the most experienced trauma surgeon in the world. But as time went on, David Nott began to realize that flying into a catastrophe – whether war or natural disaster – was not enough. Doctors on the ground needed to learn how to treat the appalling injuries that war inflicts upon its victims. Since 2015, the foundation he set up with his wife, Elly, has disseminated the knowledge he has gained, training other doctors in the art of saving lives threatened by bombs and bullets.

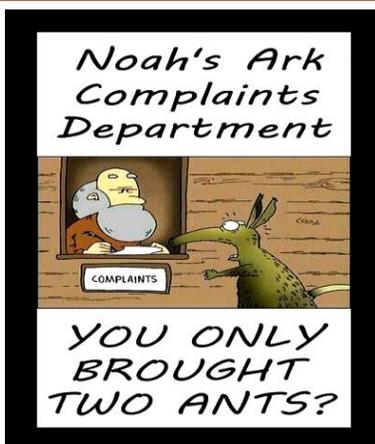
Ed: Thanks again Sheila for the recommendation. Very thought provoking!

If you know of a book you would like to see featured in SE News please do let me know. Ed



Interesting fact about the UK

As one of the biggest urban and over-populated areas in the world, the British capital is a “melting pot” of nations and cultures. The city is the home to more than 8 million citizens who communicate using different languages. There are more than 300 different languages spoken in London.



Nostalgia..... 1 January 1949



Peacetime conscription in the UK is regularised under the National Service Act 1947. Men aged 18–26 in England, Scotland and Wales are obliged to serve full-time in the armed forces for 18 months. The last national servicemen were discharged in 1963.

Sue Dashper's Lock Down Garden

From the greenhouse is a cactus (*Astrophytum Myriostigma* or Bishop's Mitre) in flower, with a hoverfly.

From the garden is an Oleander, which along with a red and white one is planted out in the garden. So far, they seem happy and have survived the winters.



Garden News

Don't be over-tidy in your garden. Leave a pile of autumn leaves in a quiet corner, maybe alongside a pile of logs and lots of creatures will find shelter this winter, from tiny insects to frogs and newts.

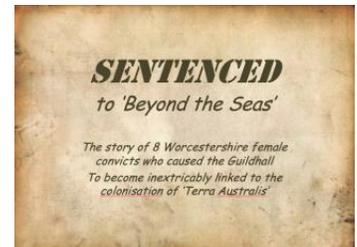
Species which hibernate, such as hedgehogs, are trying to pile on the pounds ready for their long winter sleep. Help them by leaving food out – you can buy food specific to hedgehogs or put out cat or dog food which isn't fish or beef based.



Next On-line Talk – 20 October



Sentenced to Beyond the Seas **David Clark**



The true story of eight Worcestershire women sentenced to death or transportation in the 1780s who all ended up on the first fleet of convicts to Australia. One came back a rich woman, another became the progenitor of the largest living family of descendants living in Australia today.

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