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Dear All

What's New

This lovely little person on the left is just to remind us that Spring is well on its way and very soon we will see even more new life around us. Frank and I just love seeing the trees springing into life again, the earth displaying beautiful flowers and baby ducklings and cygnets enjoying their first days of life. There is much beauty on this planet which man should cherish but as we all know this is certainly not always the case – but that is another matter - but anyway please do take the time to read the World Wildlife Fund feature in this newsletter.

It is pleasing to hear that many branches are now planning activities for later in the year when we are able to meet up again. I am aware that quite a few branches do meet in hospital premises and that getting bookings may not be as easy as before the pandemic. If this is the case and your branch is having difficulties please do make contact with either myself or your Regional Rep. Whilst mentioning RRs we are still looking for someone to take over the South East Region RR role so please do email or call me if you think you would like to know more about what is involved.

Onwards and upwards everyone. These are difficult times but, in the Fellowship, we face them together. Take care everyone!

Update on Live Talks

Remember folks. Registration is pretty easy - please just visit www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF and you will just need to enter your name and your email address for the talk you wish to register for and then you will receive an email from Alex with a link to click at the start of the talk. Live chat starts just after 10.45am with the talk starting at 11am. This together with the Q&A session makes an enjoyable experience.

Remember replays are available on demand. Assuming a member registers for a talk they will receive a confirmation email with a link to join the talk live. This same link can be used for 7 days to watch a replay of the talk on demand.

Details of the next talk are shown on page 6 of this newsletter. The next 4 talks planned are:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 9 March – 10.45am | Wandering in Flanders Fields – Melanie Gibson-Barton |
| 23 March – 10.45am | The Accidental Author – Sue Medcalf |
| 6 April – 10.45am | Thirty Years of Travel in China – Chris Forse |
| 20 April – 10.45am | Santa Evita – Hazel Griffiths |



ZOOMING IN



by Polly Willcox - Suffolk West Branch

A year ago, Zoom had not been heard of by the majority of us. Now it's with us every day, either by way of a meeting, speaking to relatives or friends or doing exercises such as Zumba.

We learn that the Zoom software was only released in 2012 as a modern enterprise video communication for video, audio conferencing, chat and webinars. Now we are familiar with phrases such as 'You're on mute', 'Turn your camera on', 'You're upside down', 'You're robotic', and when doing Zumba, the worst, 'You're frozen'!

However, these things didn't happen too much when we held our first Zoom Members' Meeting for the Suffolk West Group on 8th February. Previously we had held Committee Meetings via Zoom, but this was our first Members' Meeting since the start of the lockdown last March.

The Host booked the time for 10am to commence the meeting at 10.30am. We certainly needed that extra time for the participants to access Zoom. For example, I usually click on the link that was e-mailed to me; however, this didn't work so I used the ID and Passcode method, which did.

I was doing the 'Welcome' as members came on to Zoom. When we meet physically, it is usually my role to 'Meet and Greet' at our monthly meetings. There were 25 members Zooming that morning, and we were instructed to raise our hand and unmute ourselves if we wished to speak.

Our Chairman outlined what had been happening during the last few months since March 2020, that being the last time we had a full meeting plus a speaker. At the beginning of lockdown our Committee each had been allocated several members for them to contact by their preferred route, such as a telephone call or an e-mail, to ensure they were well and managing satisfactorily. Also, at this meeting it was interesting to hear some members' views about what they had achieved or enjoyed during lockdown. Several members were enjoying doing jigsaws, some had made items for the local hospital, and one member was doing an on-line interior decorating course. We also heard that a lot of our various groups were continuing online, such as the Book Club and History Group.

For our March meeting we hope to have a speaker. Also, something to look forward to may be a late summer picnic to celebrate 73 years since the NHS started.

What most of us cannot wait for is to meet up again physically, and there will be jubilation all around when this happens.

**On this day
17th March**

St. Patrick's Day

**I asked my
hairdresser the other
day what cut would
make me look pretty?
A power cut was not
the answer I was
expecting!**

Births: 1917 Nat King Cole 1938 Rudolf Nureyev

Events: 1337 Duchy of Cornwall established, Edward
of Woodstock (Black Prince), first Duke

1845 The rubber band was patented by Stephen Perry (UK)

1861 Italy was declared a single Kingdom, under Victor
Emmanuel II

1898 First submarine was under water for 1 hour 40 minutes,
off Staten Island, New York

1899 First radio distress signal sent from a merchant ship
floundering off the English coast

1921 First birth control clinic in London opened by Dr Marie Stopes

1959 U.S. submarine 'Skate' surfaces after an under-ice voyage
to North Pole

*Thanks to Susan
Gunning, The Royal
Marsden Branch*



Anno Domini by Peter Sykes

As a young man, I often heard old folks remark, usually with a sad smile and a knowing shake of the head, '*Growing old is no fun, you know*'. At the time, I didn't take much notice but I'm now beginning to understand what they meant. I'm discovering that Old Father Time creeps up on you insidiously.

I was in my forties when I started to use reading glasses but found them to be a nuisance. When I was working in the surgery they were on, then off, then on again, as I alternated between reading the notes and focusing on my patient. Finding the situation unsatisfactory, I invested in some bifocals, but these proved to be a waste of money. It didn't matter whether I used the upper or the lower lens, the computer screen remained out of focus. In desperation, I bought some varifocal glasses which were more expensive still. They took a bit of getting used to, but proved to be a good investment and I now wear them all the time.

In my fifties, I became deaf in my left ear. For several years, a sense of misplaced pride caused me to shun a hearing aid but, eventually, tired of being told I was shouting, I had to accept that I needed it. It brought a dramatic improvement, the only downside being a greater awareness of the driving instructions coming from a certain lady sitting in the front passenger seat of the car. '*Left, left*', she would say, indicating wildly with her right hand. Yet more expense. I had to invest in a 'Satnav' to solve that problem.

In my sixties, I needed a hearing aid in the other ear. It was either that or divorce as my wife and I regularly came to blows over the volume control on the television. Why the BBC can't persuade their announcers to speak a little louder, and the actors in television dramas to enunciate their words more clearly, I shall never know. Again, I resisted, but in the end, I acquiesced, it was worth it for the domestic harmony that returned to our living room each

evening. This brings me to another grouse. Why do folk seem to find deafness so amusing? Why don't they regard it with sympathy, as a medical affliction?

I'm now in my seventies, and though I'm pleased to report I still have my own teeth, I'm developing arthritis in a couple of joints; I guess a walking stick may soon be added to my list of medical aids. Despite being otherwise healthy, active and, I believe, still of sound mind, I'm beginning to wonder what's next: a walking frame, an in-dwelling catheter? I'm certainly realising what those old folks meant when they used to say '*enjoy yourself whilst you're young. There's nothing to commend old age.*'

The present problem is that my wife says I'm becoming doolally. I don't honestly believe that I am, though I'm prepared to admit I may not be very good at remembering names. I prefer to believe that I'm merely selective in what I choose to remember. If Jane, that's my lady wife, tells me that a distant cousin of hers has three children, well, that's fine, I'll try to remember it. But if she goes on to give me their names, ages, then tells me which one has passed grade four on the piano, and the names of their pets, I'm afraid those facts don't register in my memory bank. It's not that I deliberately ignore what I've been told, but my brain seems to decide that this information is surplus to requirements. If it's not likely to be relevant, my brain seems to say, *why bother to remember it?*

Recently though, I must admit that I've forgotten a couple of things I really ought to have remembered. There was that birthday card I was supposed to post to one of my wife's relatives, (no – not to the distant cousin who has three, or was it four children, one of whom played the guitar, or was it the flute). And there were the Euros I forgot to buy for our next holiday, and, unfortunately, our wedding anniversary – now that really did get me into trouble! There really was no excuse for overlooking it

because, when I missed our anniversary last year, I made a forward planning note in my diary which I'd actually read a few days before the big day this year. Unfortunately, I then forgot to do anything about it!

Now I seem to be in trouble most of the time. If I'm busy in the garden, and a few moments late picking up the grandchildren from school; I'm a 'scatterbrain'. I'm 'empty-headed' if I forget to put out the rubbish or come home without the most important item on the weekly shopping list.

Recently though, I saw my chance to turn the tables. It was Jane's turn to be forgetful. She'd promised to arrange for some flowers to be sent to a friend in hospital and forgot to do it. *Great*, I thought, *now my chance to get even*.

I didn't say anything at the time, but made a mental note, that the next time she accused me of being forgetful, I would remind her of the flowers that didn't get sent.

I didn't have long to wait. Within a week, we ran out of milk and yes, - you've guessed it - it had been my job to call at the corner shop to buy some. I'd forgotten it and was being reprimanded. *Now*, I thought, *an opportunity to get my own back, I'll remind her that I'm not the only one who's absent-minded*.

But dammit, I realised that I'd completely forgotten what it was that she had forgotten, that I had been so desperate to remember!

Thought for the day

*To my deafness I'm accustomed,
To my dentures I'm resigned,
I can manage my bifocals,
But how I miss my mind.*

Lord Home 1903 – 1995

Peter Sykes is one of the Fellowship's postal members. He worked as a consultant surgeon for 25 years and later in his career as a medical director of an NHS Trust. He is currently a medical novelist and speaker.

Peter's latest book entitled *All in a Doctor's Day - a collection of 45 short medical stories* is available from Amazon as a paperback or Kindle. Peter is a great supporter of hospices and all the proceeds from his books go to two hospices in his local area.

Anne and Frank Woods



Anne and Frank Woods, members of the Basildon and Thurrock Branch are celebrating their Diamond Anniversary on the 25th March 2021. They were married at Rainham Parish church in Essex, and Anne worked for many years at Basildon Hospital. They are both keen golfers and regularly play in the branch society.

Ed: Well done you Two!

ONLINE SESSIONS 10:00AM - 12:00

ADULTS 18+



LONDON BOROUGH
OF ENFIELD RESIDENTS

Creative Spark

THURSDAYS

11 March - Pompom letters

18 March - Make your own mini-magazine

25 March - Illustration for beginners

1 April - Drawing with scissors

FREE. REGISTRATION ESSENTIAL

Register at Eventbrite:

WWW.TINYURL.COM/LTTA-EVENTS

07510 917 517

WWW.LEARNINGTHROUGHTHEARTS.CO.UK

EVENTS@LEARNINGTHROUGHTHEARTS.CO.UK





**Free Wills
for our
Key Workers**

Accord Legal Services are proud to be offering FREE WILLS for NHS, Police, Fire Service staff and all other Key Workers as our way of saying thank you for their hard work throughout this pandemic.

For more information, contact Accord today on **0843 506 5115**,
or email **info@accordwills.co.uk**.

ACCORD



This offer with Accord is available to all members of the Fellowship. Please quote NHSRF2021 when contacting them.

Thank you.

Ed



Outing to Henley on Thames in June 2019

Just one of the many lovely emails I have received from members since the last newsletter. This one is from East Grinstead Branch.

Thanks Sally. It is lovely to see that Spring seems to be on the way, although this afternoon the weather doesn't feel like it.

It is so good that we can hopefully start to plan for meeting up and getting back to some normality in the not too distant future. I am dusting off my files and getting my head around it all. Our committee will meet as soon as we are able outside and start planning. We already had some dates in the diary for our members for later in the year so these will be able to go ahead. I know members will just be so pleased to be able to get together and have a chat, a cuppa and a piece of cake (or two). Here's hoping.

Best wishes

Marilyn Davis
East Grinstead Branch



Gwen and Pete Green

Barking, Havering and Brentwood Branch

65th Wedding Anniversary



Gwen writes "Peter and I retired in September 1997 and joined the Retirement Fellowship soon afterwards in 1998. We both volunteered to help on the committee in 1999. Peter helped as one of the "Tea Boys" on Fellowship days, (one of the most important jobs I am informed).

I was voted onto the Executive Committee in 2010 as Secretary and held this post until I stepped down in June 2015. We have had many happy days outings and holidays with the Fellowship and have appreciated the friendship and companionship over the years.

Ed: Well done you Two!

Will you help to save our planet?

One of the most efficient ways of lowering your environmental impact is by **travelling responsibly**. This means, whenever you can, choosing a more sustainable way to get from A to B - walk or cycle when you can.

Transport is one of the most polluting sectors in the UK. But holidaying closer to home can make a big impact on your carbon footprint. One short haul return flight can account for 10% of your yearly carbon emissions, and long-haul flights can completely determine your carbon impact.

If you have the time you can usually get trains to European destinations to cut your carbon footprint. Get creative and try to find alternate ways to travel.

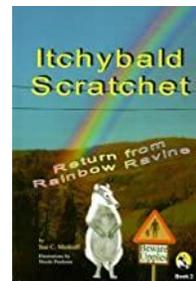
If you do choose to go abroad and are looking to see the local wildlife, keep in mind how to go about it ethically. Attractions that involve you being able to pet, hold or feed animals for money are generally a no-go.

Be wary of attractions involving any unnatural interactions with animals. As a rule: observe animals from afar in their natural habitat and look to support local conservation projects.



Next On-line Talk – 23 March

The Accidental Author Sue Medcalf



In this talk we find out how Sue Medcalf became an accidental author! Her series of books came from a conversation with her sister, who had badgers digging up her back garden and she asked if she knew how to discourage them from digging!! After a lot of research on badgers Sue became hooked on them and the Itchybald Scratchet character was born!

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