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Dear All

## What's New

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 a full 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.

One further piece of news is that Jack Yan, Regional Rep for South East Thames, has decided to stand down from his role after a good number of years. He has been RR since I joined the Fellowship in January 2016 and I have enjoyed working with him and have much respect for his abilities and enthusiasm. He will be much missed but many thanks to you Jack.

As a result of Jack deciding to stand down, I would like to hear from anyone who would be interested to consider taking on the RR role. Whoever takes up the position would have the full support of myself and Central Office. So, if you would like more information please do make contact.

## Update on Live Talks

Remember folks. Registration is pretty easy - please just visit [www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF](http://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

## Sue Dashper's Lockdown Garden

### Sue is with Barking, Havering and Brentwood Branch

Well! - It's been a year since I started posting lockdown photos!!

This time I've picked two snowy trees- just a dusting of snow, I didn't venture out when the snow was at its thickest.

On the left is one of three hardy palm trees in the garden (Chusan or Windmill Palm, *Trachycarpus Fortunei*). They are dioecious, the male and female flowers are formed on separate trees. Two of ours are female and one is male - we get a lot of seedlings growing in the grass, but they are easily mown.

On the right is a Bay tree, which we try to keep clipped to shape and a manageable height. I do use the leaves when a recipe calls for it, but I'm not all that fond of the taste. I've just learnt, via Google, that the Bay is also dioecious, I'll look at the flowers more closely this year - we've not noticed any fruit so it's probably male.



Make the most of your life!

### On this day – 3<sup>rd</sup> March

3rd March 1847 Alexander Graham Bell was born, in 1869 Henry Wood, and 1968 Brian Cox.

Those who died on 3rd March include, in 1987 Danny Kaye and 2018 Roger Bannister (the first man to run a sub 4-minute mile).

Some events: In 1794 first performance of Joseph Haydn's 101st symphony, in 842 first performance of Felix Mendelssohn's 3rd symphony (Scottish), in 1845 Florida became the 27th state in the US, in 1969 Launch of Apollo.



The original water pump in Pump Lane, Cambridge

In 1962 the Queen opened a new hospital situated not far from Nine Wells, a natural water source which plays an important part in the history of cleaning up the town of Cambridge, which was a very dirty place until improvements began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

As one of the most visited cities in East Anglia, Cambridge (in normal times!) is full of tourists who arrive to admire historic university colleges and churches on King's Parade and view pristine gardens from the river along 'The Backs'. They leave behind plenty of rubbish and every morning, before rush hour, sacks full of debris (mostly food packaging) are collected for recycling or landfill before the sightseers and shoppers arrive again.

By contrast, in mediaeval times rubbish of all kinds including human and animal excrement was either buried in the grounds of colleges or dumped in the river or the King's Ditch. The King's Ditch dates from Norman times and stretched in a large arc round the town centre and the older colleges. The surrounding land became heavily polluted and water-borne diseases like typhoid were rife.

In the Middle Ages only those who had access to spring water were the lucky ones. In 1295 near the site of a Franciscan monastery, a natural spring served the needs of the monks, and later in 1603 a conduit was constructed to convey this spring water to Trinity College. This fed the ornate fountain in the main quad. Nearby there was a tap for town folk to use as well as college students and staff. This is still

## How did the local authorities go about dealing with pollution in the 1600s?

**Philip Rundle, Cambridge Branch reports on much needed plans to clean up olde worlde Cambridge.**



The original water pump now in the Cambridge museum

in situ but now marked 'not for drinking'. Some of the lead piping and valves have been preserved and are on museum display.

Water from these natural springs was originally used to flush out the King's Ditch but in 1610 the town and the University jointly agreed to fund the diversion of this water by conduit to the town.

Cambridge was growing rapidly during this period, as was the population (both town and gown). The water from Nine Wells was not sufficient to provide a constant flow to meet its needs. A natural spring at Cherry Hinton was combined with a pumping station feeding a reservoir which could supply constant piped water (and the right to charge users for it). This big undertaking was agreed by Act of Parliament in 1858 and set the pattern for the future as both industry and the population continued to expand.

*Contd. next page*



In 1888 the Fulbourn Pumping Station was built, a team of heavy horses being required to bring the component parts of the beam engine to the site. Eventually, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Cambridge Water Company sank deep artesian bore holes into a vast underground reservoir which still meets the needs of Cambridge today.

Overhead pumping stations became redundant but the fine brick buildings which housed them are still visible today having been converted for domestic use or preserved as museums. The Riverside Pumping Station, which closed in 1968 and once pumped 22 million gallons of water per day, has today been painstakingly preserved with all its machinery still intact. It is available for the general public to view on open days.

Before the introduction of the water closet (invented by Thomas Crapper – yes, really), earth closets were the norm, emptied out and taken away by the night soil collectors and used as fertiliser or buried in cesspits.

Water closets only helped to solve the problem of water and soil pollution, together with the risk of typhoid and waterborne diseases, if they were connected by pipes to sewers and thence to sewerage treatment plants. This only began to take place nationally during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In Cambridge it was not until 1895 that a proper system was in place for dealing with waste for sewage and general rubbish. It combined a pumping station to pipe sewage to a sewage farm at Milton and an incinerator for burnable rubbish. By now water closets in the town were connected to underground sewerage pipes and the King's Ditch had been built over.

Regular domestic rubbish collection was now introduced, initially by horse and cart, which was sent to the destructor. Here all burnable rubbish was put into a boiler/incinerator which in turn produced the steam to drive the pumps to the sewage farm. The clinkers removed from boiler/incinerators were not wasted but were used with cement for house foundations, paving stones and prefab buildings.

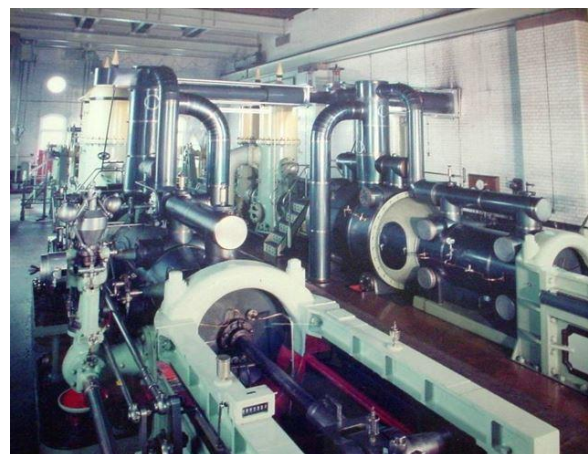
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The famous Hobson's conduit near Pembroke College



Cambridge bargemen clearing waste from a nearby pumping station



Modern water pumps formerly sited at Fleam Dyke, Fulbourn

# BACK IN THE DAYS

Kindly forwarded to me by Monica Sado of Brent Branch

Back in the days of tanners and bobs,  
when Mothers had patience and Fathers had jobs.  
When football team families wore hand me down shoes,  
and TV gave only two channels to choose.

Back in the days of three penny bits,  
when schools employed nurses to search for your nits.  
When snowballs were harmless; ice slides were permitted  
and all of your jumpers were warm and hand knitted.

Back in the days of hot ginger beers,  
when children remained so for more than six years.

When children respected what older folks said,  
and pot was a thing you kept under your bed.

Back in the days of Listen with Mother,  
when neighbours were friendly and talked to each other.

When cars were so rare you could play in the street.  
when Doctors made house calls; Police walked the beat.

Back in the days of Milligan's Goons,  
when butter was butter and songs all had tunes.

It was dumplings for dinner and trifle for tea,  
and your annual break was a day by the sea.

Back in the days of Dixon's Dock Green,  
Crackerjack pens and Lyons ice cream.

When children could freely wear National Health glasses,  
and teachers all stood at the FRONT of their<sup>5</sup> classes

Back in the days of rocking and reeling,  
when mobiles were things that you hung from the ceiling.

When woodwork and pottery got taught in schools,  
and everyone dreamed of a win on the pools.

Back in the days when I was a lad,  
I can't help but smile for the fun that I had.  
Hopscotch and roller skates; snowballs to lob.

back in the days of tanners and bobs.



February in  
West London  
by Chris  
McCrudden,  
West Middx.  
Branch

An interesting contribution from Susan Gunning, The Royal Marsden Branch

## NEOLOGISMS - a newly coined word or expression

Wikipedia Washington Post has published the winning submissions to its yearly neologism contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternative meanings for common words.

**Coffee** (n.), the person upon whom one coughs.

**Flabbergasted** (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.

**Abdicate** (v.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.

**Esplanade** (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.

**Willy-nilly** (adj.), impotent.

**Negligent** (adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.

**Lymph** (v.), to walk with a lisp.

**Gargoyl** (n.), olive-flavoured mouthwash.

**Flatulence** (n.), emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.

**Balderdash** (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.

## 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.



## Do you enjoy a good Jigsaw?

If you do then why not visit a website  
recommended by Susan Gunning  
[www.jigsawplanet.com](http://www.jigsawplanet.com)



Here you will find plenty of puzzles to choose from, and one can determine the difficulty by selecting the number of pieces per puzzle. Individuals within a group could have competitions on the fastest completion time!

## Will you help to save our planet?

Food production is a major driver of wildlife extinction. What we eat contributes around a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions and is responsible for almost 60% of global biodiversity loss.

Farming animals for meat and dairy requires space and huge inputs of water and feed. Today, one of the biggest causes of forest loss is the expansion of agricultural land for animal feed production, such as soy. And producing meat creates vastly more carbon dioxide than plants such as vegetables, grains and legumes.

Moving away from a meat-dominated diet towards a more plant-based diet can lower your impact on the environment. Vegetarian/vegan foods are massively on the rise and becoming far more common in restaurants, cafes and supermarkets, so you'll rarely struggle.

Not only that but cutting down on meat and dairy products can reduce your weekly food bills.



Next On-line Talk – 9 March

## Wandering in Flanders Fields Melanie Gibson-Barton



Melanie Gibson-Barton brings to life the well-known and certainly the less well known First World War sites in a themed way that will appeal to all elements of the audience.

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)

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