

Dear Member

26 March 2021

Who could have predicted this time last year that we would still be in a lockdown situation?

I still can't have a haircut until after 12th April because I live in England! If you live in Wales hair salons are now open and in Scotland they will hopefully reopen on the 5th April. Quite rightly I was chastised by members in Wales and Scotland in that I only referred to the easing of lockdown in England in my last letter. As you will appreciate the situation varies somewhat in the 3 countries.

Yesterday in England MPs voted to confirm the PM's 4 step plan to ease lockdown which could see all legal limits on social contacts removed no earlier than 21st June as long as the strict conditions laid down are met. As the current indications are going in the right direction with numbers of daily deaths, new cases and people in hospital continuing to fall and the fact that 29 million people have received their first vaccine we can be cautiously optimistic that the plans will be implemented on the dates outlined.

All travel restrictions within Wales are lifted tomorrow, outdoor sports facilities are now open and from 12 April all shops will be open.

In Scotland outdoor mixing between 4 people from up to 2 households is already permitted with outdoor non-contact sports also allowed and from 2nd April stay at home becomes "stay local".

So although the rules and the pace of easing vary all 3 countries relying on the data have clear paths outlined to reach near normal by the summer. This degree of certainty will enable branch officers to make plans for branches to reopen in the summer.

Another of our members has remarked that she didn't receive her membership card so this is to remind everyone that the membership card issued in April 2019 is valid for the life of your membership. Replacements can be issued by contacting central office.

In England and Wales, Sunday 21st March was Census day (Scotland have deferred the Census to 2022). You will have received a letter explaining that the preferred method of completing the census is by www.census.gov.uk but if you have not been able to do that for any reason you can request a paper copy by calling 0800 141 2021. From the beginning of April there will be people employed by the Office for National Statistics to visit households that have not completed a form. Their purpose is to encourage people to complete the census and to give advice but these staff do not need to enter your home, they will be wearing PPE, will remain socially distanced and will have a formal means of identification.

As I mentioned in my last letter we are continuing to plan to hold our Conference/AGM at the Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester from 21st to 23rd October and I should be able to let you have more details when I send out my next letter at the end of April. The good news is that Isle of Wight Tours who organized our last 3 conferences are now back in business as Ocean View (IoW Tours) and will be organizing this year's conference on our behalf.

The Mirthy Talks continue to be popular and the next talks are:-

6 April	10.45am Thirty Years of Travel in China	Chris Forse
20 April	10.45am Santa Evita	Hazel Griffiths

Sir Muir Gray is a physician who has worked in public health since 1972 holding a variety of senior positions including being the first director of the UK National Screening Committee. He is an internationally renowned authority on health care systems. Since 2017 he has been Director of the Optimal Ageing Programme and is also a postal member of the Fellowship and has volunteered to host webinars for our members in May – “Helping members recover from lockdown”. He will discuss plans to help people to live longer better through lifelong learning. Further details will be available next month.

Our next Fellowship Newsletter is in June and we would be very pleased to receive contributions from members about your experience of lockdown, whether you have taken up new pastimes or any lifestyle changes you may have made. The deadline for inclusion in the newsletter is 17th May.

We are looking forward to meeting up again and I am sure that members would like to join me in thanking all of the branch officers for what they have been doing during lockdown to ensure the Fellowship continues to flourish.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely



John Rostill OBE
Chief Executive