



Celebrating 5 July 1948

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Dear All

What's New

Time seems to fly by so fast and here we are approaching 5 July once more. I hope that those of you who will be celebrating in one way or another will have a great day.

We have some interesting articles this month. Apple Blossom Time written by Jean Warren, is a poignant story of her experiences in hospital in 1978, 30 years after the birth of the NHS. The Celebration of Life for Danny Lyons is the story of a remarkable gentleman.

For those of you that enjoy walking we have an invitation from Redbridge and Waltham Forest Branch to take part in their series of walks in London.

We also have a page about increasing branch membership for those branches seeking to increase their numbers. If any help is needed in this area please do not hesitate to make contact.

As many of you know we previously had a branch in Tunbridge Wells, and I have been asked to try and create a new branch in this area. If anyone would like to be involved in this could they please make contact.

Finally, I would just like to say that the Mirthy Talk this week was just excellent. As Jane Dubery said on Facebook "Brilliant Mirthy talk today - I laughed 'till I cried at one of Geoff's stories." Why not join us on the next talk on 13 July.

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. 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 2 talks are shown on page 6 of this newsletter. The next 4 talks planned are:

13 July – 10.45am
27 July – 10.45am
10 Aug. – 10.45am
24 Aug. – 10.45am

The King and his 14 Wives – Jenny Bowen
A Passion for Fashion – Rukshana Master
It's not what you say – Alan Jones
Arsenic – the Victorian Housewife's Friend -
Graham Harrison

Danny Lyons

April 1st 1930 – May 7th 2021



Danny proudly displays his one-hand-made poppy at the Poppy Factory in Richmond during the Branch outing in July 2015.

Editorial Note: This celebration of life for Danny Lyons was sent to me by Janet Lambley who is the Branch Secretary of East Surrey Branch. I do not think that I ever had the pleasure to meet this gentleman, but I can honestly say he sounds as if he was a remarkable man. I hope you find reading about Danny's life both interesting and rewarding.

In the Branch, we knew Danny as a warm and friendly gentleman who welcomed and greeted members and speakers as they arrived at meetings. He joined in 2009 and was an active Committee member from 2012-17.

Danny, the youngest of twelve children, grew up in Ennis, County Clare. He came to England when he was 17 to work and train as a nurse. After qualifying as SRN at St James Hospital in Leeds in 1954, he did his National Service in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Between 1956 and 1957 he was posted to Christmas Island in the South Pacific where the British Government was testing thermonuclear bombs. At the end of his service, he received a commendation for outstanding zeal and devotion to duty from the Task Force Commander, Air Vice Marshall W.E. Oulten. As he pointed out in a previous Branch newsletter, though, he was the only SRN on the island, so he didn't have much competition.

After national service, Danny's nursing career took him to hospitals in the north and south of England and a further qualification as a Registered Mental Nurse. He retired from his final post as Assistant Director of Nursing at Warlingham Park Hospital in 1991, having worked in the NHS for 42 years and been on the nursing register for 57 years.

Danny's retirement wasn't a quiet one. As he put it: 'I didn't know what to do with myself when I retired.' He saw an advert for Crisis at Christmas, the charity that looks after homeless people over Christmas and worked for them for ten consecutive Christmases, helping set up medical services.

At about the same time, Danny met a group of people planning to go to Romania to support an orphanage for HIV-positive children. Over the next ten years he raised £10,000 for the orphanage through car boot sales and donations. The money bought medicine, clothes and household equipment. He described his shock at the condition of the children when he first visited the orphanage and his satisfaction with having helped to make a difference as conditions improved.

Danny didn't only travel to Romania in his retirement. He made twenty trips to Lourdes in France as a volunteer nurse with Jumblance UK and the Arundel and Brighton Diocese to care for sick and disabled pilgrims.

In May 2001, Danny travelled to Buckingham Palace to receive the award of Member of the British Empire for his charity work from the Queen herself. He said, 'When I was growing up barefoot in Ireland, I never expected that one day I would shake hands with the Queen of England!'



Apple Blossom Time



by Jean Warren

Ed: I feel sure readers will identify with this short story written by an 'old' friend of mine. Jean writes as a patient in hospital back in 1978. She proudly told me in mid-June that her story had been shortlisted in the Real Story Category of the King Lear Prizes 2021.

Elsie's committed suicide in the hospital bathroom. She bought the razor blade in the shop downstairs and by the time the nurse found her the water was as red as the body was white. The bathroom door's locked now, but Elsie's still inside and the nurses are whispering in corners when they don't think we can hear. They can't understand why she did it. She'd had her foot amputated, it's true, but that's no big deal. She was managing very well on her crutches and was due to have a prosthesis fitted this afternoon, but that's not going to happen now.

Dulcie and I know why she did it though. She found a small ulcer on her right heel this morning and she knew where that would lead. Elsie's seventy years old with no family to look after her and she didn't want to spend her last few years as a cripple in a nursing home.

Dulcie and I don't blame her. We've both considered suicide ourselves, so we know the temptation. Dulcie's even tried it. She was brought in barely alive after swallowing a whole bottle of aspirins. The children found her when they came home from school and had the sense to call an ambulance. Dulcie loves her children, but the pain is stronger than the love. I understand that too. If I had children, I think I'd sell them to the devil tomorrow in exchange for the pain-free life I fear I'll never have.

I have something Elsie and Dulcie don't have, though. I have the optimism of youth. I'm only twenty-three, with my whole life ahead of me as they say. So far, I've wasted four months of it lying in a hospital bed, but things are bound to get better. I just have to get through this bit; this time when the pain makes me suck in my breath and refuse to exhale, when my body's at war with my mind and my mind refuses to accept what the doctors say. The operation was a success, they say, and if I'm still in pain it's because I find some psychological satisfaction in it.

I say psychology has a lot to answer for. Every day I'm winched into a warm pool to have my limbs manipulated until my mind accepts that I can do it for myself; every day I'm winched back into the cold air and the shivering starts fresh waves of pain rippling through me. By the time I'm dried and returned to my bed I'm ready to commit suicide myself and I'm cursing Freud with every fibre of my being. No doubt the man had some basis for his theories but they're not right in my case. I think if I'm really mentally ill this is not the cure, but if I'm really mentally ill how would I know?

But I do know. Deep inside me dwells certainty, in a dark and quiet place where there's some sort of comfort. It's a selfish place with no room for other people. There it's just pain and me; there we fight every day, and so far, I've won. Know your enemy, they say, and I certainly know this one. I study it carefully, noting the first signs, timing the build-up, concentrating on each swell of agony until I know the pattern it follows. Now I'm ready for it; I prepare my body for it, inhaling with each wave of pain, filling my lungs with it, breathing it out slowly. One day I'll be able to do it instinctively, like driving and holding a conversation; one day I'll be able to do it and talk at the same time; maybe one day I'll even be able to stand up and do it. But for now, I just lie in that blackness and endure it.

Comfort's black too. She's one of the growing armies of Caribbean nurses arriving in our hospitals. She's a middle-aged woman with a beautiful smile, not fat, but plump enough to justify her name, and there's a serenity and calmness about her that's very restful. I imagine her as a much-loved wife and mother in her real life outside the hospital, the sort of woman who should have a dozen children to sit in her lap and appreciate her home-cooked meals and home-spun wisdom. That Jamaican mother knew what she was doing when she named her baby Comfort.

Campbell's from Scotland and he's hoping to be promoted to sister soon, though I think they're going to have to find another description for him. I've been on his ward longer than any other patient and we've formed a kind of friendship. He's young and good-looking and the first male nurse I've ever met. They're a new phenomenon and a lot of the female patients are still wary of them, but I like it when Campbell turns me in the bed. He's stronger than the women and he lifts me more easily and doesn't drop me so hard. It's still a painful experience, but not quite as bad. He's kind too. Yesterday he came in on his day off to bring me a great armful of apple blossom he'd cut from his garden. We can see the trees in blossom on the heath from here and he must have heard me wishing I could be outside to smell it. He brought his girlfriend with him to visit me and to make sure there was no hint of impropriety. It takes a special kind of person to do something like that on his day off.

Then there's Jenny, the student nurse. She's small and sturdy and nips round the ward in her sensible shoes, fetching bedpans, taking temperatures, lightening everyone's day with her happy smile and constant chatter. She watched my operation as part of her training and obviously enjoyed the experience, though it sounded quite off-putting when she described it to me.

"They used something like a tiny hammer and chisel and chipped away at the bone," she said. "If it wasn't for the blood it would have been a bit like watching a sculptor at work."

No wonder I felt so bruised afterwards, though I'd have described it more like being hit with a sledgehammer and then being expected to lie on the bruises. It's a good thing Jenny doesn't mind the blood though. She'll probably get the job of cleaning up the bathroom after they've moved the body. She gets all the rotten jobs, like scrubbing bedpans and wiping up vomit, but she doesn't seem to mind any of them, though I suspect she's not as unmoved as she seems to be at this moment. According to the porter she was the one who discovered the body and that can't have been nice. It must be a shock to lose a patient in that way, especially a patient who was doing so well in terms she understands. She's too young and healthy to be afraid of helpless old age and young enough to view this as a senseless death she should have prevented, but she's putting a professional face on it, making beds and washing patients as though she has nothing but the immediate job on her mind.

They'll close all the ward doors and pull down the blinds at the windows when they take the body out and they'll pretend we don't know what's happened, but it's difficult not to know everything in a place like this. There's a reason why the bathroom's closed for cleaning and we all know what it is. It just won't be mentioned when Elsie fails to return. Her bed will be wheeled out and we'll be left to assume she's moved to another ward, though everyone knows we'll assume no such thing. None of us will sleep that well tonight, staff and patients alike. We'll all have a lot to think about and regret.

We're all learning to keep our problems to ourselves and keep smiling through the bad times, though I can't always manage it when I'm in that black place. Then I just ignore everyone, and they have the sense to ignore me. It's the best way. I've watched the nurses with the other patients who've come and gone. They don't like the ones who are full of complaints and self-pity. Those patients get professional treatment, but they don't get the apple blossom. It's the same with visitors. They don't stay long when all they hear is complaints, but when Minnie comes, and we laugh ourselves silly everyone wants to join in.

These are the things I remember each morning as I pin the smile on my face, take up my burden of pain and prepare to carry it through the day. These are the reasons I don't blame Elsie and Dulcie, or anyone else who makes a different decision. Every day's a choice, and one day I might make a different one myself.



Email from Marilyn Davis East Grinstead Branch

4 June



Morning Sally

What a change a day makes!! We had a glorious day yesterday for our branch picnic in the local park. There were 23 of us who enjoyed catching up and enjoying the sunshine. We all brought our own picnic so there was no sharing on this occasion, but perhaps next time if restrictions allow. Unfortunately, some could not make it or felt a little anxious still, but it was well worthwhile. A good start to getting back to some normality. We will be planning the next event very soon.

A few happy pictures attached to use as you wish.

Hope all well with you. Best wishes.

Marilyn Davis



Email from Sheila Sheppard Brighton Branch

7 June

Brighton & Hove City Branch had a lovely walk today. Coffee time at 11am at Wish Park Cafe followed by a gentle stroll along Hove seafront, ending with lunch at a cafe on the beach. Thank you to Pauline Booth for introducing us to the walk & showing us a beach hut she used to have.

Best wishes Sheila x

Greetings from

Redbridge and Waltham Forest Branch

and an invitation to some Fellowship Walks

I was very pleased to receive a copy of this branch's excellent newsletter in the post last week. It was **Frances Heaslip**'s first attempt as editor after taking over from **Jo Henderson** who from all accounts has done a terrific job over the past nine years. A great start for Frances!



Eileen Brooks is leading a number of walks over the summer and would like to invite other Fellowship members, branch and postal, to take part if they wish. Her only request is that she be contacted in advance to let her know you are coming. eileen_brooks@yahoo.co.uk 020 8590 1827.

Friday 30 July

Meet at 11.00am at Chingford Station for a circular walk through the forest to the Owl pub for lunch, led by Angela. If anyone would like to join us there for lunch please let Eileen know. We should arrive there between 12 noon and 12.30pm.

Monday, 23 August

Meet at 11.00am at Green Park Underground Station, walk through parks and follow the Low Line. Finish at London Bridge or Monument Station. Proposed lunch at Southwark Cathedral café.

Wednesday 8th September

Meet at 11.00am at St. Paul's Station for the anti-clockwise western loop of the Jubilee Greenway; to Leicester Square Station, the second half of the walk the branch did back in February 2020.

Friday 8th October

Meet at 11.00am at Whitechapel Tube Station for an interesting walk through Stepney to Mile End. Suggested lunch stop at the end of the walk at the Greedy Cow.

Wednesday 11th November

Another chance to walk round 20th Century War Memorials in Central London. Meet at Hyde Park Corner Station Exit 1 at 10.45am to have 2 minutes silence at 11.00am. You may like to arrive early and have a look at the murals in the subway. Public toilets cost 50p. Finishing at Westminster suggested place for lunch Methodist Central Hall. After lunch you may like to see the Royal British Legion Field of Remembrance in the grounds of Westminster Abbey. Each cross carries a personal message to someone who lost his or her life in the service of our country. It brings home how many people have lost their lives and how important it is that we never forget what they have done for this country.

Monday 13 December

Meet at 11.00am at St. Paul's for the first half of the "Design of the Times" seeing modern architecture in the City of London, finishing at Liverpool Street Station. Lunch stop to be confirmed.

Retirement

- R** - Relax and
- E** - Enjoy your time off
- T** - Try something new
- I** - Inspire somebody
- R** - Remember to enjoy the small things
- E** - Explore new places
- M** - Make time for yourself
- E** - Entertain your friends and family
- N** - Nap frequently
- T** - The best is yet to come

If people from Poland are called Poles, why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

I am taking this wine box back. It says once opened it will last for six weeksIt only lasted three days!

Recycling in 2019 I'm an alcoholic...I just had a party.

Recycling in 2020 I swear I didn't have a party ... I'm an alcoholic.

Who entered a contest to find his own look alike and came third? Well – none other than Charlie Chaplin!

Would you like to increase your branch membership?

Branches in the South East, and the Fellowship in general, vary greatly in size from the small to the very large - for example Brent with over 200 members. Whatever the size of the branch, depending on several factors, branches may feel they would like to attract more members. Here are just a few ideas for doing just that. Remember help is always available if needed from myself, your Regional Representative, Lucia Hiden northeastengland@nhsrf.org.uk or Central Office.

Word of Mouth



This works very well. Encourage friends and colleagues to come along to a branch meeting/outing. Remember they can have worked/volunteered in any area of health/social care or be a partner or close friend.

Posters



We have some great posters on our website which can be downloaded from <https://nhsrf.org.uk/resources/templates-2/> branch's own information can easily be added. Posters placed in your local Trust, library etc. can help to spread the word.

Facebook



As many of you will know we now have an excellent Fellowship Facebook page and some branches also have a page for their own branch.

Did you know though that each area in the country has its own Facebook group/s. For example, 'Cambridge Community News' has 6.3K members and 'Community News Croydon' has 2.3K members. If you type in the name of your area into the Facebook search box you will be able to see the various groups in the area of your branch. You can then join a group and write a post with or without photo/s giving local residents information about your branch and inviting them to make contact if interested. Below is an example of a possible wording.

Hello everyone. My post today may be of interest to you if you are retired or about to retire from a role in the health/social care sector (paid or voluntary). I help to run theBranch of the NHS Retirement Fellowship, a national charity founded in 1978. Our branches, run by members, offer excellent social opportunities and a range of activities. If you would like to learn more about us with a view to perhaps joining then please do message me here and I will be happy to respond. We would love to hear from you. Thank you.

If a post is made, then it could be useful for committee/branch members to 'Like', post a 'Comment' and 'Share' on their own timeline to encourage interest. If you would like help with making a post in line with this suggestion, please remember help is available as stated above.

Branch Leaflets



Branch leaflets are very useful to pass to anyone expressing an interest in the branch. Trusts can also be asked to pass them to staff as they retire. If your branch would like help in creating your own leaflet please do make contact.

Next On-line Talk – 13 July

The King and His 14 Wives
Jenny Bowen



Jenny spent a lot of time in Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland) and she is the representative in the UK for The Kingdom. Eswatini is a little-known country and people seem to pass through rather than stay. Let Jenny take you through the history and the highlights of Eswatini incorporating amusing anecdotal stories, bird and animal impersonations and why the King has so few wives (in comparison to his father).

And the on 27 July

A Passion for Fashion
Rukshana Master



From reading Vogue magazines to designing for Jimi Hendricks and Sophia Loren, Rukshana truly had a 'Passion for Fashion'. She shares her adventures starting with training in the USA at the age of eighteen, to coming to live in England and setting up her very successful fashion business in her own, unusual way. She talks about how fashion has changed – or how it hasn't - through the years, spanning the 70s, 80s, 90s and indeed right up to 2014 when she retired. Having organised umpteen Fashion Shows for numerous charities, working mainly in beautiful silks and cottons, Rukshana has many a story to share!

Useful Organisations:

Turn2Us www.turn2us.org.uk is a national charity that helps people in financial hardship gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and support services. Tel: 0808 802 2000.

The Marmalade Trust www.marmaladetrust.org This website is a useful resource on the topic of loneliness which most of us will experience at some point in our lives, regardless of age, circumstance and background. We all experience loneliness differently. It's a common misconception that loneliness is limited to older people. In fact, it's now the 16-24-year-olds who are the loneliest age group in the UK.

Tax Help for Older People www.taxvol.org.uk is operated by the charity Tax Volunteers. It offers free tax advice for older people on lower incomes. The service is delivered by tax professionals. Tel: 0845 601 3321 or 01308 488066.

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
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