

South East News

and update from



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What's New

I am sure most of you will be aware that the Fellowship is currently facing a period of change. We face challenges which it is my hope we can face and manage for the good of all. The Fellowship celebrates its 45th birthday this year and it is my hope that it will continue for many years to come.

In this issue we have some updates on our smaller branches. These groups often find it difficult to function, especially if they do not have the benefit of free hospital accommodation. With only a small number of members it is very difficult to accumulate funds to pay speakers. Despite these difficulties we have a number of branches in our area that keep going. So well done them!

As everyone knows it is often difficult to fill committee positions. In the light of this ongoing problem, I have included a piece of research which basically emphasizes what we already know, that keeping the mind active can help to stave off dementia. For this reason alone, why not think about taking on a committee role, provided of course you don't already have one, in which case well done you!

The new Members' Council met on 24 January and its Chair, Lorraine Taylor, will attend her first Trustee Meeting on 7 February.

Anyone interested in joining a branch who needs help with deciding which one is invited to visit our website (www.nhsrf.org.uk) or they can contact me.

Please do keep up all the good work and do keep your news coming. Always good to see it in my inbox. I would also like to emphasize that I am happy to discuss the proposed changes to the Fellowship.

Take care and keep well everyone.

Sally



Wisbech Branch

by Jenny Sirett

Wisbech Branch was formed in 1982 and there were 27 members at that first meeting. Another branch in the area was also formed at the same time, but unfortunately that folded several years ago which has left Wisbech as the only branch around here all these years on and we are still going, although for how long we do not know.

The branch currently has 35 members and we have three more folk who have expressed an interest. The branch's usual format is to meet monthly at the Roshini Centre and we have had some wonderful speakers in the past.

Each year we put on a Strawberry Tea and invite Huntingdon and Peterborough to join us. Live music usually entertains us. December brings the Xmas lunch.

In September we take a coach load to The End of The Pier Show in Cromer, which is the only remaining one left in the country. We have had many wonderful coach holidays, as far away as Germany down the Rhine and to Holland to see the Tulip Fields.

We have held all the usual activities such as a Bring and Buy sale, Harvest Festival and a sale of produce the proceeds of which go to E.A.C.H. - East Anglia's Children's Hospices.

Our branch has been a little slow to get going again after Covid, but this month the committee will be sitting down together to plan events for 2023.

Editorial Note: Jenny has been involved in running the branch for well over 25 years and regularly writes items about the branch for the local newspaper! She is currently ably assisted by Sandra and Pauline. She now wishes to stand down from the committee and it is hoped that some of the membership will step forward to help run this lovely branch. I am sure you will join me in wishing them well.

New Members' Council

The first meeting of the Members' Council took place on the 24th January. In attendance were Mike Seaton our new CEO who introduced himself and gave a brief resume of his career, George Kempton, Chair of the Fellowship and Andrew Moss, the retiring Editor of the Fellowship Magazine. There were also 10 Regional Representatives present including two newly elected Postal Members. It was decided that the Council's remit would wholly concentrate on ensuring members' views, ideas and concerns were brought to the Trustees attention, which now that the Chair/Vice Chair are able to attend the Trustee Board meetings will enable this information to be given "straight from the horse's mouth" so to speak. The future of the Members' council looks promising.



Cambridge Branch visit Westminster Abbey

by Steve Greaves

We walked in the footsteps of kings and queens; we sat in the presence of the good and the famous and we admired the fabulous trappings of pomp and pageantry which have formed a colourful background to royalty and the church in England for hundreds of years.

The occasion which provided these and many other historic details was a highly successful Branch outing to Westminster Abbey in October when 45 of our members enjoyed an afternoon touring the Abbey and learning some of its many secrets before attending Evensong to round off the visit later in the day. Everyone returned to Cambridge nurturing their own particular memories gleaned from the tour, but there was no doubt that for many of us the Evensong provided a superb finale to what had been a glorious day.

Westminster Abbey is an architectural masterpiece of the 13th-16th centuries. It presents a unique pageant of British history and has been the setting for every Coronation since 1066 and numerous other royal occasions, including 16 royal weddings, the latest being William and Catherine Middleton in 2011. In the 1040s King Edward (later St Edward the Confessor) established his royal palace by the banks of the river Thames on land known as Thorney Island. Close by was a small Benedictine monastery founded under the patronage of King Edgar and St Dunstan around 960 A.D. Edward chose to re-endow this monastery and greatly enlarge it, building a large stone church in honour of St Peter the Apostle. This church became known as the “west minster” to distinguish it from St Paul’s Cathedral (the east minster) in the City of London. Building has never really stopped since the Confessor’s Abbey in 1045 – the Hawksmore West Towers went up in 1745 and the Weston Tower to the galleries was opened only four years ago. In addition, work has started to restore the 14th century Sanctuary and turn it into a new visitor reception and entrance facility. Repairs are constant and as a Royal Peculiar the Abbey receives no financial support from the state or the C of E, so they have to raise at least £25m a year to keep going – largely from entry fees but also from bequests.

The Abbey, universally acknowledged as being a work of architectural genius, is a place of daily worship, deploying the resources of high musical expertise, and is also a burial place of kings, statesmen, poets, scientists, warriors and musicians. Its presence is the result of a process of development across the centuries which represents the response of a monastery and later a post-Reformation church to the stimulus and challenge of its environment. Apart from two kings who were never crowned – Edward V and Edward VIII (who abdicated) – every monarch since William the Conqueror has been crowned in the Abbey, and the ancient original Coronation Chair can still be seen there. The Abbey has had 3,300 burials in the church and cloisters plus many more memorials. It also contains more than 600 monuments, and wall tablets – the most important collection of monumental sculpture anywhere in the country.

One of the most notable among the burials is the Unknown Warrior, whose grave, close to the west door, has become a place of pilgrimage: visiting Heads of State invariably arrive to lay a wreath at this grave. Another unusual grave within the Abbey is that of Ben Jonson, poet, playwright, and contemporary of William Shakespeare, who was buried there in 1637 when he died in great poverty.

Contd. overleaf

Perpetually short of money, despite hand-outs from Royalty and supporters, Jonson was buried standing up because he could not afford more than an 18 inch plot or a memorial stone. One was cut for him after a passer-by paid a stonemason 18 pence. However, the mason misspelled Jonson's name, incorrectly inserting an unnecessary 'h' in it!

Following her marriage to Prince William in 2011, Catherine – now the Princess of Wales – returned to the Abbey to lay her bouquet on the grave of the Unknown Warrior and in so doing maintained a tradition which saw other Royal brides also place their bouquet on the grave, including our late Queen Elizabeth II. In a building which has so many treasures, memorials and trappings of royalty through the ages it is difficult to choose just one which stands apart from all the others, but the Henry VII Lady Chapel has a good claim to being that one special treasure. It boasts a spectacular fan-vaulted ceiling which is a glorious example of late medieval architecture and was once described by the 16th-Century historian John Leland as 'the wonder of the world' and to this day it continues to inspire wonder and appreciative murmurs from modern visitors, including our own modest group. The Lady Chapel is the burial place of 15 kings and queens including Elizabeth I, Mary I, and Mary Queen of Scots. In the chapel, close to where Elizabeth I is entombed, there are also two cribs containing the remains of two infant children of James I. As is the traditional sign of respect, they were buried facing East (to Jerusalem) and a mirror is placed facing one such crib to allow visitors to see the sculpture of their faces.

Above them on the wall is the sarcophagus/urn containing what are widely assumed to be the remains of the Princes in the Tower (Edward V and his brother Richard, Duke of York) who were allegedly murdered by their uncle, Richard III, so he could usurp the throne in 1483. Because of the four children entombed there, the area is known as Innocents Corner.

The wealth of historical detail such a visit provides gave us a great insight into the life, pomp and ceremony of our ancestors and helped to make what was a special day even more interesting and enjoyable. It certainly provided a host of memories for our members who returned home tired, but happy after spending a fascinating day following in the footsteps of royalty.

Leisure-time sedentary behaviours are differentially associated with all-cause dementia regardless of engagement in physical activity

Study published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in 2022

Researchers from the University of Arizona and the University of Southern California in the US monitored the leisure habits of 145,000 Britons aged 60 and older for approximately 12 years.

At the end of the period, the data was analysed. It was found that there were 3,507 positive cases of dementia. None of the participants had been diagnosed with dementia at the start of the project.

After cross referencing the dementia diagnosis with the study participants' leisure activities, they discovered that those participants who sat for long periods while engaging in passive behaviours, such as watching TV, had either received a dementia diagnosis or were at an increased risk of developing the disease. The findings were consistent regardless of whether they were physically active at other times during the day. Interestingly, the research data revealed the risk of developing dementia is lowered if the participants engaged in more active behaviours while sedentary, such as reading or using the computer.

It has already been established that being physically active is helpful in reducing the risk of dementia. This study confirms that how time is spent in passive activity is also of significant importance.



National Gardens Scheme

Debbie Thomson

**Publicity Co-ordinator for the
Scheme in Essex writes.....**

While many people have heard of the National Garden Scheme not everyone is sure how the charity works or how it uses the money it raises. Starting in the early 1900s to support district nurses, it now gives visitors unique access to over 3,500 exceptional private gardens in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands, and raises impressive amounts of money through admissions, teas and cake. Thanks to those who open their gardens, volunteers and visitors they have donated over £67 million to nursing and health charities which include Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK and The Queen's Nursing Institute.

As an example, Essex has over 70 gardens opening for the Scheme this year. And with its mix of villages, towns, coast line and riverside they range from small suburban plots, through country gardens to large and historic estates. Below are details of just a few but the full list for Essex plus East Anglia and the South East, including opening times and ticket prices, can be found at:

<https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk>

Barnards Farm in West Horndon CM13 3FY has 54 acres to explore and is a good mix of planting with wonderful trees, a large lake and an important collection of sculpture. It opens every Thursday from 6 April to 31 August, and also on two Sundays 2 July and 3 September for family days. Pre-book at ngs.co.uk.

Another regular opener is Feeringbury Manor near Coggeshall CO5 9RB. Open every Thursday and Friday from 6 April to 28 July and again from 1 September to 6 October. This is also a large garden overlooking the river Blackwater, and with an extensive plant collection.

There are a number of gardens with spectacular collections of roses. To see them you could head to Fudlers Hall in Mashbury CM1 4TJ on Sunday 25 June or Peacocks in Margaretting CM4 9HY on Sunday 4 June or Sunday 2 July. Furzelea in Danbury CM3 4JR as well as having marvellous roses also has good late summer planting including dahlias, salvias and grasses. It opens on Monday 1 May, Sunday 4 June, Sunday 9 July and Sunday 17 September.

Ed:

Perhaps a visit to one of the National Garden Scheme's gardens in your area could prove to be a very enjoyable day out.

Brick Lane
Music Hall



North West Surrey Branch

How we spent our winter months

Anne Edwards

Not always the best time of year but we have managed to keep ourselves happy and amused throughout the cold winter months.

Thanks to last year's P60 campaign we have been pleased to welcome new members who have joined in with our events. Our current membership is 60.

In November we went to Brick Lane Music Hall in London. An afternoon of music and magic on a Christmas theme and an excellent afternoon tea.



Jane receiving her flowers

December took us to Silvermere Golf Club for a three-course lunch (or two for those with smaller appetites). Andy Field, the Chairman of our local hospital trust, Ashford and St Peter's, joined us for lunch, and after lunch gave us a brief update on local healthcare services. A picture quiz and raffle completed our lunch and most of us were able to get home before it got too dark.



Andy talking to us



January saw us at a local garden centre for afternoon tea. Everyone was able to catch up before our first meeting of January. A table was laid out for us to help ourselves to sandwiches, chicken goujons and chips, scones (with clotted cream and jam, of course, with the usual discussion about jam on top or below the cream!) small cakes, and delicious squidgy chocolate brownies. Nearly forgot the doggy bags!

February's social activity is an afternoon tea and quiz. This has become an annual event run by one of our members. It gives everyone a chance to chat while they discuss what the right answers may be, not too difficult, we hope!

March and the Spring will be here, so we will be back to our monthly outings, which will include a guided walk of parts of London.





Grandmother's Apron

Thanks to Monica Sado for sending this in!

The principal use of grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath, but along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot plans from the oven. It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for sky kids, and when the weather was cold, grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood-stove.

Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron, from the garden. It carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls. In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many worthwhile purposes. Remember grandma used to set her hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw. They would go crazy trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron.

I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron – except love!

Author: UNKNOWN



Pancake Day

British people use a jaw-dropping 52 million eggs on Pancake Day alone, which is 22 million more than any other day.

The biggest pancake ever made was 15m wide and 2.5cm deep, containing a staggering two million calories.

Olney in Buckinghamshire is famous for its annual pancake race, with the first run in 1445.



Walkers on the Sept. 2022 Cutty Sark walk



An invitation to join some interesting London Walks hosted by

Redbridge and Waltham Forest Branch

Branch and Postal Members are invited to attend the following London Walks.

Thursday 9th February 2023 – Meet at Monument station, Fish Street exit, at 11 a.m. for a 3½ mile circular walk – Whittington's Cat and Winchester geese.

Friday 10th March 2023 – Meet at North Dulwich station at 11 a.m. for a 5-mile circular walk including a park, a wood and a nature reserve.

Please inform Eileen Brooks if you would like to go on any of these walks. You would be very welcome.

07956 819008 02085901827 eileen_brooks@yahoo.co.uk



An invitation from the Royal Marsden Branch Thursday, 23 February

On Thursday, 23rd February at 11.00am we will be meeting in the Crypt Café of the Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square. A social occasion to catch up, have some refreshments and the opportunity to partake in a very informal quiz. We do hope you will be able to join us.

It would be really helpful if you could let me know if you are planning to come, so we can 'reserve' the correct number of seats/tables. Both postal and branch members will be very welcome.

For those of you who are interested in art and would like to combine culture with the café, the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery are adjacent to the Church.

We look forward to seeing many of you.

Susan Gunning rmh@nhsrf.org.uk



An update from
Hammersmith Branch
by Cecelia Rodrigues

Hammersmith is one of our smaller Greater London branches with a membership of just 16. Cecelia informed me that although they were small in number, they were a good friendly group, supportive of each other.

Because the branch is small, funding is a problem when it comes to booking speakers and the suchlike. Prior to Covid they were able to block book a lovely room in the hospital. It was on the ground floor with windows on two sides. Lockdown posed a problem and when they were able to meet again it was not at the hospital but at a church hall which cost them £25 per meeting. Expensive for a small branch. They were fortunate, however, as in November 2022 they were allowed accommodation in the hospital once more. They cannot block book this time around, however, and have to request a room booking every couple of months. This I gather can be a little challenging.

Last year the members enjoyed meeting up for example for lunch at Wetherspoons. A number also joined an M25 event run by The Royal Marsden when they visited Brighton.

With limited funds it is not possible to have a speaker at every meeting. Cecelia told me, however, that the group had recently had an interesting talk on Alzheimer's. For 2023 they are planning puzzle and bingo sessions as well as some speakers. Cecelia emphasized that a number of members help to run the branch in some way and being small things can get done quicker. She did emphasize though that they would love new members as they would surely bring with them new ideas for the branch.



East Kent (Canterbury) Branch

Stephanie Marsh



This branch, our newest in the south-east/East Anglia started small but is gathering pace and now has 15 members. They would love to hear from anyone interested in joining them.

The photos show some of the members of the branch busy decorating the tree for the Festival of Christmas trees in St Mary's Church Chilham 2022