

Fellowship

MAY 2020

With this issue

– your LIFETIME membership card

and news from Central Office

Page 2

Barbara takes up regional role

Barbara Ham, vice chair of Bristol Central branch has stepped up to be the new regional representative for the West of England

Page 8

Warrington see secret bunker

Members visit the Western Approaches Museum in Liverpool

Page 9

Patrons:
Ethel Armstrong MBE
Ken Jarrold CBE

Members respond to Corona crisis

Fellowship members have shown their true character in the face of the Corona virus and are stepping forward to help in their own branches and in the wider community.

It's a response that has not surprised anyone, remembering our shared background in a service that

the nation applauds every Thursday evening.

"We don't need to be told how wonderful the NHS is" said Margaret Moffat, the Fellowship's chairman. "We were part of it. Nothing brings it home to people like an emergency. We can all be proud of helping to build what it is today. We can also

be proud of the Fellowship to which we all belong, which is there for us now, and will be again, when we can all meet when it is safe – hopefully before too long."

"...We don't need to be told how wonderful the NHS is...We were part of it."



Margaret Moffat,
Fellowship chairman

continued on page 3



Bexley branch treasurer May Man has experienced Covid -19 coronavirus and come through it.

May beats the virus

"I had a temperature for over a week a lot of pain and a dry cough which is still going on after two weeks" she told Fellowship. "I have asthma so I had a flu jab and a pneumonia jab and was well protected but I still got it."

"I looked on the 111 website and it asked if I got breathless sitting down – which I didn't, so the advice was to stay at home for seven days and take paracetamol. I had a temperature of 39 degrees and the cough is very

exhausting. On the second day I realised I could not smell things – even the cat litter tray."

May, 67, used inhalers to help her breathing and after two weeks was feeling on the way to recovery, even though the cough and the loss of a sense of smell was still there. "At the end of the day I am grateful I have got over it" she said.

Meanwhile her husband Eddie has been self isolating after having a high temperature for one day and a dry cough, but without such severe symptoms.

May was a health visitor for

36 years and before that a sister at Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup. "When you are a health visitor you can pick up infections" she said. "This was nothing like that. I had pain in my head like sinus pain, I had three days of stomach pains and I have never had a high temperature for so long. The cough is exhausting - nothing comes up, but with paracetamol, my inhalers and plenty of fluids I live to tell the tale."

Looking back she wonders if a visit to the high street and a stop in a coffee shop five days before the onset may have been where she contracted the virus. It was the only day she went out.



You can also get a flavour of what we do by seeing our members stories on our Facebook page – just search for NHS Retirement Fellowship or follow us on Twitter @NHSRetire

www.nhsrf.org.uk

Lucia (and family) in lockdown

Lucia Hiden, the Fellowship's Head of Communications and North East Development Officer tells how her family is meeting the challenges of lockdown and home schooling – and has some ideas to share.

My two children finished the week before the schools closed because Theo (almost nine) had a cough. So my home school opened its doors early.

We have a schedule as my children respond to structure and it helps us make sure we have time to work too. We are now on version three of the schedule. The school has been amazing - some guidance on learning but mainly fun and interesting challenges which we can share.

Never busier

As for me, I have never been busier. My days are crammed from the moment we wake up and my husband and I do not stop until we collapse onto the sofa and get ready for the next day.

The children are finding lockdown difficult. Ellie doesn't understand why "that nasty bug" means she can't see her friends or go to school. Theo is worried about his grandparents getting poorly. Grandparents mean



a lot to their grandchildren. So what can you do to keep in touch? You may well be doing some or all of these but here are a few ideas and suggestions:

Ideas to share

- We have found Zoom (a free, online video chat tool) amazing. We now regularly have "family zooms" with both grandmas who are on their own.

Theo is doing a school project on his family tree and he is using Zoom to talk to his

grandmas about their families - why not dig out some old family photos and talk to your grandchildren about your history?

- Or why not read a bedtime story to younger grandchildren or read the same book that older grandchildren are reading so you can discuss it (i.e. your grandchild does a book review, which will often be on their school's list of challenges).

- Can you give online lessons to your grandchildren? NHS people are great adverts for

science subjects. My friend's grandchildren are asking their grandparents one question each day about their lives and the grandparents respond the next day.

- Send your grandchildren letters and parcels - they love getting mail and to know that you are thinking of them is comforting and reassuring. And writing back to you means they get some handwriting practice.

- Have a sunflower growing competition with your grandchildren.

- Have a jar in your house and keep notes in it of all the things you can do together when this time has passed.

I shall put the odd Facebook update on how things are going for my family and any other ideas I have for you. Please feel free to share your ideas or email me at northeastengland@nhsrf.org.uk

And wish me luck. It could be a long few months yet...

Your card for life

New membership cards which are yours for life and give access to discounts and benefits are included with this issue of Fellowship.

The Fellowship will no longer print and post new cards every year. Your lifetime card is attached to a letter. Please keep it safely.

Membership Card

www.nhsrf.org.uk

Here for you

Central office staff are working from home during the virus lockdown and the office is closed. But the phone line – **01305 361317** – is being monitored and messages will be responded to. Please remember to leave your contact number.

You can also email Sherry or Debbie on sherry.smith2@nhs.net or debbie.arnold4@nhs.net or contact them directly:
Debbie **07951821258** Mon-Weds;
Sherry **07842128796** Weds-Fri.

In time of crisis

Now more than ever in a time of crisis members may wish to contact the Fellowship's Benevolent Fund.

The easy way used to be to post a form to central office, but the office is closed and staff are working from home. Please contact Sherry or Debbie either by phone or email (see "Here for you" to the left). You can be confident of confidential and sympathetic help.

You can be confident of confidential and sympathetic help.

Members respond to Corona crisis *continued from page 1*

John Rostill, Chief Executive added: "My hope is that when this is over, members will be saying they were glad to belong to the Fellowship. I feel proud to be part of an organisation that is demonstrating unity and support for its members.

"Am I surprised? Not particularly – because it is what NHS people do. Just as all the people on the

front line are doing things they did not think they were going to have to do. A lot of our members are doing all sorts of things to help."

The virus is taking its toll on our members and as the weeks go by there will be news of tragedy as well as happiness as people recover. Branches are making contact with as many members as possible,

especially those who have been irregular attenders at meetings or are not on email. "I don't want to learn at the year end that there has been a member who had had no contact for three months," said John.

Many are finding innovative ways to communicate while in self isolation. Like many members, Margaret Moffat and husband Tony are

missing contact with friends and family, but have found help from Skype and even House Party, as well as more traditional and perhaps forgotten communication like letters and cards.

John Rostill added: "It's been a pleasant surprise to find many branches making use of technology like Zoom and What's App to add to phone calls."

The Fellowship shows its character

Fellowship members up and down the country have been stepping up to the plate and showing the Fellowship at its best by supporting one another during the virus pandemic.

Most branches have devised a programme for contacting members – especially those who live alone – to make sure they are coping with the challenges of staying at home. Many are also setting up groups to read books together, study family history, play Scrabble or circulate quizzes.

In **Croydon** members are producing a newsletter to keep members entertained and informed, co-ordinated by secretary Hilary Fife. And they have been thinking of others: gift bags with tea, coffee and biscuits have gone to front line staff at Croydon University Hospital.

Basildon and Thurrock, led by Vic Griffiths, divided the 120 members among four committee members

who each took on contacting 30 people to make sure all was well, and in **Scotland** all the branches have arranged a similar process making regular phone calls to members.

The new **Banbury** branch is encouraging members to knit or crochet six inch squares to make blankets and circulating a quiz. George Wakefield, chairman of **Oxford** branch, has sent the £135 surplus from the lunch club, plus a personal donation, to Oxford Hospitals Charity which appealed for help as donations dried up.

Warrington branch, like many others, has many friendship groups who are in touch with each other anyway and committee members are keeping in regular contact with others. **Suffolk West** are organising

their book club, genealogy group and newly formed history group on line. **Aberconwy** branch chairman Don Brandon has produced another of his popular crosswords.

Huddersfield members have been stepping up to the challenge with their knitting needles following a request from the matron at local intensive care units and the knitters, sewers, crocheters and quilters are making matching hearts to give to the relatives of those bereaved in intensive care. One will be kept with their loved one, another will be sent to their relative in a card so they can share something physical with their loved one.

John Toman reports from **Wales** that branch leaders have been magnificent in their response and a special

effort has been made to contact members in isolation and alone. Branches have been identifying online and postal members, devising a questionnaire about support needed, sending out newsletters and producing a register of members who need regular contact. Increased use of Facebook has prompted interest from potential new members while other means of contact including texts, Twitter, and video conferencing are being explored. Cardiff branch is aiming to use Zoom to continue branch business.





Sandy's a dominoes international

The Fellowship has a champion dominoes player whose exploits with the sticks with dots on have taken her all over the world, including achieving international honours.

Sandra (Sandy) Boreland, a member of St George's, Merton and Wandsworth branch learned the game from her father and has been in love with it ever since.

"My family were from Jamaica and it was always part of family life" she said. "A lot of people see dominoes as a pub game. In the Caribbean it's one of the biggest sports going. It's a great memory thing, there's a lot more to it than matching sticks against sticks."

Like bridge, you play in pairs with a partner with whom you need to have an understanding. You need to be able to "read" the dominoes, remember what's been played, work out who is holding what and use your dominoes to help your team.

Sandy joined the Cosmopolitan Sports and Social Club in Wandsworth, of which she is still secretary. They play in leagues against clubs in London and other cities like Birmingham and Sheffield and have played abroad in Singapore, Cuba and the United States.

What was once predominantly a male game is now becoming much more open to women and the first UK women's team - UK Diamonds – is now flourishing with Sandy as its secretary. "It's really exciting" she said, "we have attracted a lot of attention on TV and radio."

Like the men, the women whack down the dominoes with a force which adds to the drama of the contest and creates excitement that can rival a darts match. In the leagues all the players have nicknames: Sandy was previously "night nurse" because of her occupation, but since retirement she has become "SandyP" which is emblazoned on shirts.

"You get to know a lot of people. I am quite well known known in the domino

realm because of the things I have done. There are some brilliant women domino players out there," she said.

Sandy's NHS career began aged 18 when she started nurse training at St George's and has since covered many areas in hospital and community nursing. She was responsible for setting up a night service in Wandsworth and later worked helping student nurses and as a district nurse before retiring after 40 years in the service. "I loved my job" she said. "I loved the patients and the people and the rapport with colleagues."

She lost her father and her husband in one year, and has since found fellowship in the NHSRF. "They are a great group. I appreciate being part of it."



Lucky escape for Jack

Jack Yan, regional representative for South East Thames and his wife Mei narrowly escaped being stranded on the other side of the world after a holiday in New Zealand.

They had been away for six weeks and although they had heard of people cutting short holidays, they decided to complete their visit and flew out as planned.

"Little did we know that next day they closed the border" said Jack. "Then we had to change planes in Singapore. Our plane left at 11.45. They closed the airport at midnight. We had no idea that was going to happen until we boarded the plane. We just could not believe our luck."

Back home Jack and Mei have been in isolation but are now re-surfacing. Both are members of Bexley branch.

Suffolk West Heritage plans halted by virus

Enterprising plans made by Suffolk West branch for the Fellowship's heritage project funded by the Heritage Lottery got off to a great start – but are now on hold because of the virus pandemic.

The branch had planned dates for events in Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury and was hoping to have an exhibition in June in Newmarket, but the pandemic has halted everything.

In March a history display in the foyer of West Suffolk General Hospital attracted much interest from public and staff. One incident was a highlight: a young lad named Jack was looking at the displays with much interest and explained he was doing a project on the Crimean war. He was particularly interested in Florence Nightingale and another lady he couldn't quite remember her name...



Main image: Suffolk West members Milena El-Gohary (left) and Jeanette Lee (right) with Jan Bloomfield, branch patron and Ali Devlin, a nurse at West Suffolk Foundation Trust at the Bury St Edmunds event in March

he said I think it's Seacole. His face lit up as we showed him information about Mary Seacole. He was so excited he had all the information for his project.

Six people who had seen the exhibition joined at the next branch meeting. Some branch activities continue and members hope for an opportunity to celebrate

coming out the other side – and remembering those that have not.

The school project

The heritage project also had a school element, reflecting how important it is to develop young people's understanding of our health and care heritage.

It gave an opportunity to introduce the Fellowship to the head teacher of a local primary school, with a plan of action. The response was extremely positive with permission given to engage the whole school in the plan which involved rolling out an NHS colouring competition and quiz. The subject for the competition, to comply with the heritage theme, was an old nurse's uniform and new nurses uniform and an old and new ambulance. Year six designed pictures for the younger years to colour in.

The branch was fortunate that just before the competition a clinical practice facilitator nurse from the local hospital gave an interactive talk on the history of the NHS since 1948. This exciting school project is now on hold, but hopes to resume later and there is news that another school is showing interest in doing something similar.



Have you tried Scrabble online?

Rosemary White

Many branches are finding new ways of using what the internet has to offer to keep in touch with members or to share pastimes that help to make isolation more enjoyable.

In Wessex, regional representative Rosemary White is hoping to set up a scrabble group for East Dorset and Ringwood branch, using Scrabble GO, the online version of the popular word game.

"I play it with my family, especially my grandchildren.

It's very easy to download, even those who are not computer literate would not find it difficult. It allows you to pick out who you want to play with, so you only play with people you know. I find it very enjoyable."

Playing Scrabble GO does not mean you have to sit by your computer for hours. You can place your words and your opponent can pick up the game hours or even days later.

Rosemary, who has been chairman of her branch for some years, has a son and a daughter and three grandchildren.

Oxford gains from online banking

Inspired by new treasurer Keith Johnston, Oxford branch is among many already discovering the benefits of using online banking.

Keith took over after pleas to the branch for a new treasurer fell on deaf ears for almost 12 months. "I felt that old sensation of a hand being raised" he said. "It took a fair amount of effort and form filling to set up online banking but after about two months we enabled three members to authorise payments.

"It means we can pay creditors directly (no need to meet to sign cheques) and our balance is immediately updated. No

more waiting and wondering if and when a cheque will be presented. This year we were able to pay our capitation on line which means our accounts at the end of April will reflect our true position and no-one in central office has to go to the office during a virus pandemic to handle cheques.

"Of course, measures must be in place to safeguard the account, but I believe two-signatory bank transfer to be at least as safe as cheques and provides an easier if not better audit trail."

My story – *my adventure*

Helen Datta, the first nurse to come straight from school in India to train in the NHS in the 1960s tells her story:



“My adventure started when I was seventeen...”

The happiest times

After orthopaedic training I applied to Whipps Cross Hospital in London for General Nurse Training and was accepted to start in 1966. The next three years were the happiest time of my life as a nurse. The experience, skills and knowledge I gained at Whipps Cross were the foundation on which my nursing career was built.

“While a third year nurse I met a wonderful young man from India and fell in love. I got married in July and became a State Registered Nurse in November. After three years of wearing a paper cap, the starched cotton cap of a registered nurse felt like a deserved crown.”

After a visit to India with her husband, Helen returned and saw an advertisement for ward sister in an orthopaedic ward at Edgware Hospital.

“To my surprise I was invited to an interview and got the post. I was delighted but nervous about having so much responsibility without enough experience. My husband and parents said I would not have been selected if the management did not think I was capable of doing the job. I accepted the post and I felt I managed the ward well and enjoyed being a ward sister.

...I was separated from my mother and siblings in India and feeling sad at the thought of leaving them and yet excited at the thought of seeing my father again and going to England. I was experiencing a whirlwind of emotions. My father had arrived in England the year before and was working hard to save money to bring our family to join him.

“I arrived at Victoria station where my father was waiting for me. I was ecstatic to see him again. He suggested there were two avenues I could take - nursing or teaching. I opted for nursing. My father arranged for me to start at a hospital run by nuns, St Gerard’s Orthopaedic Hospital for Children in Coleshill, Birmingham.

“Separation from my father was very distressing and I was incredibly homesick. I missed my father, mother and my siblings desperately. I use to cry myself to sleep for months. I found everything so new and alien. I desperately wished I was back in London with my

father and wished we were all together as a family as we were in India.

“I used to get bullied”

“I found nurse training easy, but being a newcomer to England quite difficult. I used to get bullied and, in my naivety, did not even know it was happening. One day our nurse tutor called me aside after class and said not to put my hand up when she asks a question. She was well aware that I knew all the answers but she had noticed resentment from the other students.

“The hospital did not employ any domestic staff to wash up after the student

nurses’ supper. So we had a rota to wash up and lay the breakfast table for next morning. Regardless of whose name was on the list, on most nights I was told to do it, especially on Thursday when everyone rushed off to watch Top of the Pops.

“I did these chores without a thought until the tutor spoke to me. It was only then I realised that I was being bullied. One evening I was told to do the washing up when it was not my turn. I said “No, the person on the rota can do it”. There was silence. I left the room and never got bullied again. From there on I enjoyed my time at St Gerard’s.

“...I feel so proud of being a part of the NHS and being British.”

“I have always enjoyed being a nurse and even to this day I cannot get nursing out of my system. The NHS is in my blood. I am still employed as a bank nurse at a local hospice. I have worked in every teaching hospital in London.

A university degree

“My husband and I had two lovely daughters following my first ward sister post. I devoted my time to their upbringing and I worked part-time as a night sister at the Middlesex Hospital. When the children went to university I decided to go to university too. I studied for an MSc in nursing at the University of London and subsequently an Executive MBA at the University of Nottingham. I always wanted to be a Director of Nursing and was heading in that direction when my husband was diagnosed with the most aggressive form of acute myeloid leukaemia. My excellent, kind and considerate bosses allowed me to be with my husband the whole time he was ill and undergoing chemotherapy. Unfortunately after fourteen months and five courses of chemotherapy he died and my ambition died with him.

Excited to be back

At present I am very involved in my four grandchildren's lives and in voluntary work.

For eight years I was the expert member of St Mary's Hospital, Research and Ethics Committee and for six years the chair of the governors of a primary school. I gave both the jobs up when my grandson was born in order to spend more time with him. For a few years now I have been working as a volunteer for the Human Tissue Authority, where I interview live donors for kidney transplants.

“Even after all this time, I find I am excited at being back in the NHS and love the work. I feel so proud of being a part of the NHS and being British.”



Helen is a postal member of the Fellowship and lives in Kingsbury in north west London.

Top left: Helen in 1963

Above: Helen with Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Executive and Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council

Toolkit for lockdown survival

A Covid19 branch and member support toolkit which details websites and links which provide information and help during the virus crisis has been developed by two Fellowship officers.

Bob Middleton, Project Officer and **Karen Kennedy**, Development Officer North West have worked together to create a varied list of resources which include mutual aid, computer skills, information on scams, and useful links to places for advice on achievable and practical indoor exercises to improve health and wellbeing during lockdown.

Among the websites listed are:

Covid Mutual Aid

A website that lists groups and organisations offering help near you. Enter your postcode to find out support available

Computer skills

A website listing local centres providing simple computer skills

SCAMS

Information on scams aimed at vulnerable people

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice Centres near you providing advice on issues such as benefits, debt and employment.

Simple exercise

There are also all sorts of programmes offering simple exercises to do at home to keep you well during lockdown. They include:

- NHS
- Move it or lose it
- BBC Joe Wicks
- Green Goddess
- Sports England

Mental Health

For mental health the NHS website has advice on staying at home during lockdown

General advice

There is a Citizens Advice website with general advice on Corona Virus and what it means for you.

For further information please contact either: Bob Middleton on maxietom@yahoo.com 07969 056939 or Karen Kennedy on northwestengland@nhsrf.org.uk 07967 489162.

An electronic version, with links to all the websites is available on the Fellowship website: www.nhsrf.org.uk

Busy Barbara takes on regional role



Life since the NHS has been full of interest for Barbara Ham, vice chair of Bristol Central branch who has stepped up to be the new regional representative for the West of England.

Her region's branches are Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bath, Gordano (Portishead), Weston-super-Mare, Taunton and Yeovil and although she has visited many of them, much to her

frustration she's had to call a halt due to the coronavirus.

Her NHS career included nursing on the stroke rehabilitation unit at Bristol General and 11 years as a district nurse on the south side of Bristol. There was also a 22 year gap when the children were small, when she worked as a telephone operator in the Bristol exchange and in Sainsbury's where with a name like Ham, the place for her to work had to be the deli.

Since retirement she's been a volunteer visiting people on a befriending, scheme, she sings in a choir and after a 50 year break since her schooldays, she has

taken up playing the violin and joined an orchestra. She's also a "crafty person" and recently spent a week away with Fellowship members doing craft at an Okehampton hotel.

"I like meeting new people and I enjoy getting out and about, which is one of the reasons being regional representative appealed to me" she said. "I want to visit the branches – it's not good for me to sit at home."

Barbara is married to husband David and lives in Bristol. They have two sons, one lives in Texas and the other in Liverpool.

Olive meets fund raising challenges

Determined 87 year-old Olive Stirling, a member of Northampton branch, has let nothing stand in her way in her aim of raising money for a quiet room for elderly and dementia patients on Brampton Ward at Northampton General Hospital.



"I read about it in the Northampton branch newsletter" she said, "my late husband recently stayed on that ward so I was immediately interested. I went to a branch meeting and learned that vice chairman Carol Mabbutt was raising money for the same purpose.

"On a visit to the hospital I asked the man at the volunteer desk how to get more details. He was so impressed he gave me £10 on the spot, so that was it - I

was committed. I wanted to do a sky dive, but this idea was scuppered for medical reasons, so I thought of doing an abseil down the Express Lift tower, but I was told my hands and wrists were not strong enough.

"I was determined to do something, so it was suggested I do a mini triathlon which entailed one hour of playing badminton, a two mile bike ride and a three mile walk. I have since completed all the challenges and have worked hard

to get sponsorship and am very pleased with the result. With gift aid, £2,200 will be the final figure. I am most grateful for all the donations."

Olive was PA to Miss R. M. Illsley, the District Nursing Officer for Northampton in the 1980s.

Northampton branch held a tea party event last year which raised £257 for the same cause.

"I was determined to do something, so it was suggested I do a mini triathlon..."

Ron reaches his century

Ron Prior, who was a founder member of Chelmsford and District branch 32 years ago celebrated his 100th birthday in March.

He held several roles on the committee and only stepped down from membership and being vice chairman last year because of mobility problems. He remains interested in the Fellowship and reads the magazine. He celebrated his birthday with his wife, family and friends. Among many cards from well wishers, was one from the Queen.



Warrington see secret bunker



Warrington branch members visited the Western Approaches Museum in March. The visit was organised by former WREN, Irene Slater, who worked in the NHS after she left military service.

The Western Approaches Control Room coordinated the protection of allied convoys which carried vital supplies from America to keep the UK supplied with food and military supplies during the Second World

War. It was mothballed after hostilities ceased and left untouched until the museum opened recently.

The tour of the museum was led by a most enthusiastic guide, Olivia Lyons-Marsh.

She was full of anecdotes and information of the workings of this secret bunker. The visit was a Strollers event – where the branch aims to find indoor visits during the early months of the year.

East Grinstead progress

Ros Lobo, regional representative for South West Thames came away much encouraged after a visit to the twenty first annual meeting of East Grinstead branch.

“There was a lovely buzz about the room and members appeared to be positive and looking forward to an interesting programme for 2020” she wrote to members afterwards. “You are actively looking to recruit new members and you reach out to share activities with other branches. Following a dip, membership is on the rise. Well done - and great to hear about the various activities now that you are on Facebook.”



Cosham theatre tour

Nineteen members of Cosham branch had a very enjoyable tour of the Kings Theatre in Portsmouth during which they climbed many stairs during a two hour tour from the “gods” to the basement and learned about the history of the theatre and the customs in Victorian times.



Blackburn celebrate Sheila's 90th

Blackburn branch held a birthday party in February for the ninetieth birthday of their oldest member, Sheila Ashworth. She is a lifetime season ticket holder of Blackburn Rovers Football Club - hence the cake design.



A Cheltenham welcome

Cheltenham branch welcomed Barbara Ham the new West of England regional representative at their March meeting.



Cosham join the action

Cosham branch members took a lively part in proceedings when Fishbourne Group of Morris people – and Santa Claus - joined them to celebrate Christmas and the year end, bringing with them wishes for Christmas and continued good health.



Bournemouth

Bournemouth and Christchurch members shared a jolly time at a Christmas tea party at a local garden centre.

Members share good times on cruise

Eight Fellowship members were kept busy and made friends on a 17 day cruise to the Caribbean on the Fred.Olsen liner Braemar in December.

“We didn’t all know each other, but as part of the Fellowship we soon would” writes Margaret Moffat, national chairman. “We shared a table and a bottle of prosecco left in my cabin, and set sail.

The party included Maggie and Velda Devonish (Hemel Hempstead) Shirley Grant (St Albans) Hazel Hawker (Harringay) Barbara and Bruce Edgley (St George’s Merton and Wandsworth) and Margaret and Tony Moffat (Cambridge).

“The voyage was calm and warmish but we didn’t have time to waste, there were 11 speakers whose topics included directing “Blue Peter”, volcanos, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserves and astronomy. You could learn to play bridge or the ukulele, join the choir or go to the gym, and enjoy dance lessons every day.

“Or you could visit the library, casino, observation lounge (we saw seabirds and dolphins), enjoy a pamper session in the Spa or just sit and watch the world and sea go by.”

“Soon we arrived in the Azores, temp 19° C. As in all ports there were five or six trips or advice on independent exploring. Another few days at sea and we were in the Caribbean, temperatures now 28-30° We visited St Marten, St Kitts, Antigua, St Lucia, Grenada and Barbados from where we flew home.”

The cruise included three formal evenings and superb food throughout and staff were always charming and helpful. Five members had not cruised before, and all had a great time.

Fed.Olsen cruises were later suspended as a result of the virus, but there are hopes that the Fellowship will be able to join voyages when they resume.





ANNETTE POOLE

Annette Poole, a long standing and active member of Northampton branch has died after a long illness.

She was a pre-nursing student at Northampton General Hospital and began nurse training in 1957, qualifying in 1960. She married her husband John that year and worked in Accident and Emergency (Casualty in those days) but moved to part time nights when her first son was born. After a second son she returned to nursing as night sister on A & E before retiring in 1996.

Annette soon became an active member, volunteering to help serve tea and eventually took over organising it all, for which she never claimed expenses, despite pleas from the committee. She carried on doing it for 22 years until she became too ill to attend meetings. She will be sadly missed by all the members.

MONICA MITCHELL

It is with much sadness that South Manchester branch reports the death of Monica Mitchell. From early childhood Monica had to cope with issues arising from a tracheostomy, and its later staged closure. She was nevertheless a determined, independent, yet never self-pitying individual. As well as painting and sewing, Monica enjoyed travel with her musical husband and son. A cloth bearing her appliqued NHS RF logo is proudly displayed at branch meetings.

Monica trained as a nurse at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital. In retirement she was a committee member for many years. In later years her health suffered from deteriorating vision, reduced mobility and replacement of her tracheostomy, but she remained stoic and alert. She passed away peacefully in her sleep, aged 94.

Dr SEAMUS LYNCH

Members of Brighton & Hove City branch were sorry to learn that friend and colleague Dr Seamus Lynch had died in January.

A service to celebrate his life reflected his generosity, sense of humour and love of music. He was a compassionate man. During his career as a consultant scientist he led the way with research into infertility. He became a member of the branch in 2013 and joined in all our social events. He will be sadly missed.



LORNA CHALLIS

Lorna was one of the Fellowship's longest standing members, having joined East Surrey Branch in 1991, after a working life spanning 45 years. For over 30 years, she worked at Cane Hill Psychiatric Hospital in Coulsdon, where she started straight from school as a clerical assistant, working her way to personal assistant and administrative posts at Cane Hill and then SE Thames Regional Health Authority.

Throughout her life Lorna indulged her passion for travel, visiting many countries. After retirement she was a volunteer for the National Trust, at Nymans and Clandon Park and also organised outings for the branch. Lorna was one of the people whose sense of duty and hard work are the administrative backbone of the NHS. We remember her as a conscientious, generous and sociable member, sharing interesting stories of her career and travels.

Basildon & Thurrock members have been saddened by the loss of two members, Colin Eve and John Goodwin.



COLIN EVE

Colin was the husband of the late Ann Eve, who organised the branch annual outing. He supported her in making sure it was a complete success. He was also the quiet branch helper, setting out tables and chairs, making stands to help the tea ladies or toys for raffles. Just a great friendly member.



JOHN GOODWIN

John, a retired pathology manager, was chairman for eight years and with his wife Wendy was a committed member until he died. They were also members of Barking, Brentwood and Havering branch.

**AUDREY RODDAM
(nee GRAHAM)**

South Tees branch lost one of its long standing members in the death of Audrey Roddam in February. Audrey began nursing as a cadet at Sanderson Orthopaedic Hospital and later qualified as an SEN at Shotley Bridge Hospital.

She married and moved to Cleveland in 1969 where she worked at several hospitals and in Teesside Hospice. She joined the Fellowship in 2003 and was an active and popular member. She is survived by her husband Ken, two daughters and four grandchildren.

Aberconway Branch reports with sadness the death of three members: Ken Faulkener, Pat Williams and Lillian Williams.



KEN FAULKENER

Ken and his late wife Joyce were long standing members. He was a physiotherapist who told friends that he had enjoyed every minute of his life, his career and his family. Members always looked forward to Ken's Christmas quiz.



PAT WILLIAMS

Pat died after a short illness. She worked for many years in the ECG department at the local hospital. Always a familiar figure going around the wards, she was well liked by her colleagues and her patients. During her short illness she tried to come to as many meetings as she could and she will always be fondly thought of.

LILLIAN WILLIAMS

Lillian began her career as an auxiliary nurse in Colwyn Bay and went on to do her training in Manchester, later working at Llandudno General Hospital. In addition to raising a family she managed to find time to open a nursing home. She was also a member of Soroptomists and the WI and a very gifted flower arranger.





South Manchester seize the opportunity

South Manchester branch took full advantage of a suggestion from development officer Karen Kennedy and agreed to contribute to a local publication and website which aims to “change the record” on what it means to grow older.

The result was a prominent feature in “Talking About My Generation” which tells stories of life over 50 and shows the challenges associated with ageing, and how they are being overcome.

The magazine sent their reporter Lesley Downing to interview Fellowship members Margot and Peter Lloyd-Jones and her sympathetic report told of

how Margot worked for 40 years in the NHS, primarily as a district nurse while Peter’s career was as a barrister and solicitor.

Margot was taken by surprise that she felt lonely in the first couple of years after retirement, coming as it did after a busy working life and bringing up two boys. A regular churchgoer, she joined several voluntary groups and has taken up Tai Chi and swims regularly. Peter retired six years later and for the first few years had to deal with health problems and now attends gym classes to help mobility.

But these were things they did separately, which was when they discovered the NHS Retirement Fellowship.

They joined five years ago and are now committee members, playing a full part in activities.

“We were both a bit nervous about our first meeting” Margot told the interviewer. “But we were made to feel very welcome and found ourselves in a group of like minded people.”

Karen commented: “I try to find existing organisations in the north west that branches can use to help promote their branch. South Manchester followed up on the opportunity.”

Above:
Margot and Peter with interviewer Lesley Downing. Picture courtesy “Talking About my Generation.”



Positive feedback for treasurer training

The fourth treasurer training event which was held in March – just before the country went into lockdown – received very positive feedback.

Nine members from South West Thames region said they valued the informal delivery, practical content and relaxed atmosphere making it comfortable to share and discuss issues.

The training was delivered by Michael Bennett, regional representative for North East Thames supported by Barbara Edgley, treasurer of St George’s. Merton & Wandsworth branch. Ros Lobo, regional representative South West Thames said “A big thank you to everyone. We now have significant local capacity to support each other.”



- Photography Competition - ‘AT HOME’

be composed and taken in or around the home. Photographers may wish to capture some home based activity, something of interest or beauty, a project, a special place or person.

There will be an individual prize of £100 for the winner and, as a departure from previous competitions, there will be one runner-up prize of £50 and a Best Newcomers prize of £50, to be awarded to an entry from a member who has not won a prize before.

The theme for the current Photography Group competition, has taken into account that many members will have cancelled plans for events and holidays when they would normally be enjoying using their cameras.

The theme ‘At Home’ provides an opportunity for pictures to

As usual, many thanks to our generous sponsors, the Civil Service Insurance Society. More information and entry forms are on the website or from the coordinator, Anthea Zell email:

photography@nhsrf.org.uk or telephone: 01520 722951

Competition closes on **Friday 25 September 2020**

Postponed



Retirement Fellowship
Golf Classic 2020

The Fellowship Golf Classic, due to be held Thursday 20 August 2020 has been postponed to 2021.