

Fellowship

**November
2021**

Patron:
Ken Jarrold CBE

**Retirement is
renaissance, says
Sir Muir Gray**

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Members to get more say in new structure

Sweeping changes to the way the Fellowship works which will bring members into closer contact with each other and the charity's leadership are proposed in a report which was well received at the Manchester conference.

The new structure is now out for consultation with responses due next year. For the first time since the Fellowship was founded in 1978, counties will form the basis for the structure of the organisation, instead of the outdated and unwieldy former NHS regions.

It stems from two years of research and work by the Fellowship's Future Group which has been asking itself the question: "If we were starting from now, what would we do differently."

County representatives

If it gets the approval of members through the consultation process, each county will elect member

representatives who in turn will elect representatives to new regions to form a Members Council, which will set its own agenda and guide the Trustees on the future of the Fellowship. Nearly 800 postal members who until now have had no voice, will be represented on the members council.

"I believe passionately that as a membership organisation, our members do not have much say in the way we run it. I'd like to see more opportunity for people who wish to take part, to get involved said Chief Executive, John Rostill. "Creating a county structure gives that opportunity, and will take some of the load off the regional representatives."

"The members council will be led by the members, not by me. I will be there, but to advise not to lead. The overall leadership of the Fellowship comes from the Trustees. If members back the plan, it will be a major change to the culture of the organisation."

For details, see pages 7, 8 and 10.



Reaching for the sky

Fellowship chairman Margaret Moffat fulfilled a lifetime dream when she flew a Spitfire at 240 mph. Read her story on page 5.

Growth the key says treasurer

The Fellowship's future depends on growing membership numbers in the next 12 to 18 months if it is to survive as a valued resource for its members and the NHS.

That was the warning from the treasurer, Paul Farenden, who reported a large fall in income from membership subscriptions last year and a significant reduction in grants from the NHS. For the time being, this was offset by a £75,000 grant from the National Lottery, achieved by Bob



Middleton, and lower costs because of reduced branch activity.

The Fellowship has a strong balance sheet, with assets of over £800,000, but this will quickly be eroded if there is no membership growth. He thanked central office staff and branch treasurers for all that they do to make his job as national treasurer possible.



KEYNOTE SPEECH

Take a new look at life says Sir Muir Gray

Retirement is a renaissance and not the end Professor Sir Muir Gray told delegates in an inspirational and energising keynote speech which drew murmurs of approval and enthusiastic applause from the audience.

In a wide ranging talk, backed up by research and evidence, Sir Muir refuted the prediction that the NHS would soon be overwhelmed by a tidal wave of older people and argued that a more active life which added to strength, stamina, suppleness and skill – plus a willingness to take up challenges, would save us from being a nuisance to nearest and dearest and settling back in a chair.

The new “facts of life” were that if we live to be 60, then we can expect to live to 90 – if we are lucky enough to avoid the few diseases we cannot prevent. But we have not “evolved” to live lives governed by the car, the computer and a desk job with little activity, and calories everywhere and the causes of most of our problems are environmental in origin.

Take up challenges

While levels of ability can be affected by disease, which is more common as we live longer and are exposed to harmful environment for longer, there is still the chance to improve life by exercise, physical and mental, and taking up challenges. Being challenged is probably the most important thing we can do: join the Fellowship, join a committee, get even more active was the message. Life needs to have purpose, engagement with society and a positive



Sir Muir Gray with Fellowship chairman Margaret Moffat and his recent book “Increase your brainability and reduce your risk of dementia.”

lifestyle to reduce the risk of frailty and dementia.

“We should be talking about health span not lifespan. People want to live better, longer and compress the period when you are dependent on others.”

Renaissance, not retirement

If we can do that, we reduce the call on health care and social care and avoid going in to hospital (wonderful places, but you want to stay clear of them). The NHS was now embarking on a cultural revolution, doing away with the market (“it didn’t work”)

and bringing in systems and networks and trying to re-wire our brains to think not of care which means doing things to people, but ways to enable people: renaissance, not retirement.

Sir Muir has worked for the NHS in England since 1971 including being Director of Research and Development for Anglia and Oxford RHA and establishing and becoming director of the UK National Screening Committee. He is an internationally renowned authority on healthcare system and is director of the Optimal Ageing Programme.



Setting an example: John Rostill joined in the disco dancing only weeks after his knee replacement among energetic colleagues in the “dream team.”

George takes the reins

The new chairman of the Fellowship is George Kempton, who has been vice chairman for several years and teamed up with chairman Margaret Moffat to lead the organisation through the pandemic.

In a warm tribute to Margaret he reminded members that she took up the role in 2017, expecting it to be for two years. "The world changed and quite unexpectedly she did four years. She continued without complaint, working for the benefit of the Fellowship. I want to personally thank her for her



George Kempton is the new chairman of the Fellowship taking over from Margaret Moffat

friendship, commitment and loyalty.

"She has been a fantastic person to work with. We shared the same values – that whatever we do in the future it must be for the benefit of the Fellowship and its members. Thank you for the trust you have placed in me." Chris Kitchin was elected vice chairman.

Questions to the board

Diversity

A challenge to achieve a more diverse board of trustees came from Amy Muthra, from the new Central Manchester branch. "How diverse is your board?" she asked. "It seems to me it is not" she said. Chairman George Kempton said the board was dependent on people wishing to be trustees – which is a voluntary position. "The answer to the question is very much in your hands." Amy added that it was important people were chosen because they were of the right calibre. Later Chief Executive John Rostill explained that the Fellowship had striven to find a suitable trustee, and the search continues.

Bank charges

Margaret Thompson, secretary of Norwich branch was among several branches reporting problems with HSBC bank which had begun to levy charges on organisations like the Fellowship. Some branches had sought refuge with other banks – but that wasn't always easy, others were considering taking it to the financial ombudsman, while others had restricted transactions to save cost.

Benevolent fund

The Fellowship's Benevolent Fund made grants totalling £2,400 in 2020 and more grants have been made in 2021, chairman Audrey Harris reported.

"The grants may not seem very big, but when they come just at the right time, they are very much appreciated" she said. The fund still needs support from members and branches – and will have received a boost from a collection at the conference which was generously filled with notes and coins totalling over £500.

Audrey Harris has stepped down from being chairman. The role now passes to Margaret Moffat.

Conference remembers those who have gone

Memories of Ethel Armstrong featured strongly at the conference as chairman Margaret Moffat spoke of "a hole in the dance floor" without Ethel who had been so much part of national conferences for many years. And Fellowship Patron Ken Jarrold, in a zoom message, remembered how Ethel became "the public voice of the NHS" during the 70th anniversary celebrations as she recalled the dedication, skill and passion of its early days.

The Fellowship has lost two more of its most ardent leaders since conference last met: Mik Webb from Wales, and Renée Gibb from Scotland (see tribute page 6). Members remained silent for a moment to remember them all, and the many others who died last year.

A new voice for dentists

The College of General Dentistry founded this year, will give dentists a voice of their own for the first time, Professor Nairn Wilson, the college's founding president told conference.

Until now when the government was considering change, it talked to the Royal College of Surgeons, and dentists were not there. Now the college hopes to speak up for dentists in a time when the future of NHS dentistry is uncertain and the importance of oral health is increasingly being recognised.

"Oral health is important to general health and well being" he said. "If you have an infection in your mouth it can spread to the whole body." In the context of a pandemic, the college's mission was of historic importance to change

attitudes and help people to have a continuous lifelong experience caring for their teeth.

"The college will set standards and encourage advances in health care. We want to change the public attitude and perception of dentists. If you can help us in that vision, we would be extremely grateful."

A perfect storm of innovation

A project to develop the Fellowship in Greater Manchester became a “perfect storm” of innovation from start to finish, Bob Middleton and Karen Kennedy explained as they outlined the events of the last 18 months.

It has included two new branches, alliances with other organisations, including Manchester City Council, Age UK, local communities, local radio and local NHS Trusts.

It began with a heritage exhibition in the Arndale centre where one of our postal members came along to support the promotion and decided to volunteer to be chairman of a branch covering central Manchester.

Following a £10,000 lottery bid tendered by Bob Middleton, Karen joined Manchester City Council’s Digital Inclusion plan to get some ideas for the kind of digital devices that would be most beneficial to our older members. After liaising with their provider we decided to buy the Samsung A7 Tablet.

Lottery bid

Then Bob Middleton, (NHSRF Project Manager) armed with evidence and facts carefully drawn together by research, created a detailed bid to the National Lottery, which was successful in competition with lots of other organisations bidding for the same money, and resulted in a grant of £75,000 for central funding for the Fellowship to support the organisation during Covid 19.



Facebook

Karen continued research using Facebook to make contact with other groups of retired NHS staff and came up with the idea of arranging re-unions as an opportunity to make the Fellowship better known. “I just said to them, I wanted your members to know we exist. They were receptive to that and allowed me to ask the question: would

anybody fancy a re-union? It has generated an awareness and planted seeds.”

The outcome has included a new branch in Manchester Central (“virtual” until a venue has been found) and a new branch in Stockport which met initially by Zoom but has begun face to face meetings.

Partnerships

“The same factors that were used in our projects are there in other parts of the country” said Bob, “What has happened here could be followed in other towns and cities.” Karen added: “Social media, local charities and the local authority are imperative to partnership working to inform NHS retirees that we exist.”

“What has happened here could be followed in other towns and cities.”

*“Give us a wave”:
cheery delegates greet
the camera at the gala dinner.*



Margaret reaches for the sky

Fellowship chairman Margaret Moffat took to the skies and flew a world war two Spitfire to fulfil a lifetime dream in June. She told us her story:

"I never thought dreams could come true – but this one did. When I was young my dad took me to all the war films that were then in vogue, just the two of us and I loved it. One of my favourites was 'Reach for the sky' and I longed to fly in a Spitfire. On a lovely sunny day, accompanied by most of my family I went to Duxford to fly in one. It was a present from my husband and I was very excited.

"I had a safety briefing, was given a flying suit and introduced to Lee, the pilot. He said 'This is your day what would you like to do?' I told him that I lived in St. Ives so he said that we would see if we could see my house. The aircraft had entered service in 1944 and after the war had been converted into a two seater for training.

"I got into the plane and was strapped into a parachute and then my seat. I could



*Reaching for the sky
Fellowship chairman Margaret Moffat fulfilled
a lifetime dream when she flew a Spitfire at 240 mph*

hear Lee on the intercom telling me about the controls and how easy it was to fly while we taxied down the airfield and took off. Once airborne we were flying at 240 mph and he asked if I would like to fly it! I jumped at the chance and he said 'You have it.'

"It was amazing, we flew over my house and past other villages, roads and lakes. I had control (with

constant encouragement from Lee) for about 15 minutes. He then took control again and performed some manoeuvres and asked if I would like to do a victory roll. We did two, one left and one to the right. Then to crown it all we did a fly by down the runway before landing.

What an experience, we may have landed but I haven't come down yet!



Elizabeth's wonderful service recognised

Watford branch member Elizabeth Timmons has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for her services to terminally ill patients.

Former midwife Elizabeth, 85, has supported the Peace Hospice since it was founded more than 30 years ago. Her daughter Geraldine said: "She is like a modern day Florence Nightingale, being regularly stopped when out shopping and regaled with stories of how people's sons, daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren were so carefully, respectfully and lovingly brought into the world. She is always ready with a story or a joke and continues to help friends in the community whenever she can. A truly wonderful woman."

Elizabeth continues to volunteer in the inpatient unit at the hospice, having supported it through ongoing fundraising activities which have raised more than £300,000 as a result of her efforts. Chief Executive Jackie Tritton said: "We are so proud that Elizabeth's incredible contribution to our work has been recognised. She has devoted almost 30 years to the hospice, providing support and comfort to patients and with ongoing fundraising."



Record entry for "thank you" golf tournament

A record of 156 golfers took part in this year's Golf Classic held at Minchinhampton Golf Club in excellent playing weather on 10 September.

This year, for the first time, it was open to all NHS and key workers as a tribute to their heroism during the pandemic. Participants included doctors, nurses, hospital engineers and clinical coders alongside key workers from the armed forces, the prison and justice service and Porton Down science and technology laboratory.

The winner was Steve Peak, former Director of Service Delivery at Gloucestershire Hospitals Foundation NHS Trust and now Chief Operating Officer for Vanguard Healthcare Systems and a non-executive director with Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS Trust.

"Winning the trophy in a very high standard field is very pleasing" he said "especially as it entitles me to membership of the Fellowship." Other golfers praised the tournament and voted it the "best ever" and good value. Two players from an army team had to be replaced when two paratroopers were re-deployed to Afghanistan at the last minute.

Next year's tournament will be at the Telford Hotel and Golf Course on 22 August. The event was supported by the Civil Service Insurance Society, Fred.Olsen cruises, Ernest Grant and Accord Wills.

Top left: Winner Steve Peak with the Civil Service Insurance Society crystal bowl.

Renée Gibb – passion and energy

Renée Gibb, a tireless worker for the Fellowship whose passion and energy made her a leader in both Scotland and the Fellowship as a whole, died peacefully on 16 August.

Hilary Robb, Development Officer for Scotland has sent us this tribute:

“Renée was President of the Federation of Scottish Branches until she “retired” in 2019 having previously been chair of the Federation and the chair and founder of Glasgow branch. Many members will have met Renée at conference where she and Ethel Armstrong formed a formidable double act.

To say she worked tirelessly for the Fellowship would be an understatement and, in particular, she ensured that Scotland was well represented at National Council and fought her corner fiercely. Renée had a great sense of humour and was a natural raconteur but, above all, she had boundless energy and a desire to help others.”

Renée was the second child of John Munro and Jeanne Blanche Fahrni, a French singer, who had trained at The Paris Conservatoire. They met in 1917 during the First World War and were married in Paris in 1918. They moved to Glasgow where Renée was born in October 1922.

During the second world war her father was stationed in Aberdeen. Initially she did her bit for the war effort by distributing bacon rolls around military units before joining the VAD Voluntary Aid Detachment (Army) Unit. She did not take to the Army uniform, or the discipline. At one time during her training in London she was declared AWOL having returned to Aberdeen without permission. She much preferred the uniform worn by her contemporaries in the VAD (Royal Navy) branch and was soon recruited for training as a nurse serving in hospital units. In August 2020, she received the VJ Day Memorial Medallion from a representative of the Royal British Legion (Scotland). In 1944, Renée met her first husband, George Gibb,

a Swordfish pilot in The Fleet Air Arm, and a marriage quickly followed. She became a single parent in 1961 and was divorced in 1963.

To support the family, she went out to work and joined Greater Glasgow Health Board taking charge of the Registry, before being promoted to the Training Department. She volunteered in the Special Unit in Barlinnie Prison, teaching domestic science and also took up a role as a trainer involved in resettlement courses for personnel leaving the navy.

When she retired from the Health Board a colleague approached her with the words “Well Renée, I expect you will be looking for something to do with your time? I have the very thing.” The “thing” turned out to be the formation of the Glasgow branch of the Fellowship. Renée chaired the branch for many years and was instrumental in setting up the Federation of Scottish Branches. She chaired the Federation until 2014 when she became President. She joined the Red Cross in Dunblane

and trained as a hand care specialist visiting care homes throughout Stirlingshire until her late 70s. She became involved with the VAD(RN) Association and became their national chairman.

The Fellowship owes Renée a huge debt of gratitude and we will miss her but will remember the laughs and the passion and energy she put in to its existence in Scotland.”



Renée receives a silver brooch from Margaret Moffat in 2019, in recognition of her service as president of the Federation of Scottish branches.



A happy smile on her wedding day.



2021

The way forward

An outline of proposals for the future

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The Fellowship faces considerable challenges. Membership has fallen from around 14,000 seven years ago to around 7,500 today. NHS grants are disappearing, frequent changes in NHS structure, contracted out services and difficulties in reaching decision makers make recruitment more difficult. New pensioners often have their own agenda of what they want to do in retirement or are committed to caring for older family members or supporting children and grandchildren.

Today we need an organisation that more closely involves all its members in the national Fellowship “family” and links members and branches with each other and with the Trustees. By working together, we can achieve more than in isolation.

A NEW RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

A major campaign which will put branches very much in the front line of recruitment is the leaflet about the Fellowship that will go out with the P60 documents next April to more than a million NHS pensioners. If only one per cent respond, that’s 10,000 new members. Key to success will be the welcome new recruits receive, and the programme of activities branches can offer.

THE NEW STRUCTURE

- Counties in England will form the basis of the structure
- Groups of counties make a region – but different from the former NHS regions
- Each county elects a voluntary member representative whose role will include keeping in contact with branches and sharing ideas and information
- County member representatives elect voluntary regional member representatives
- Regional member representatives form a new Members Council, the main advisory body to the Trustees
- Postal members will elect two members of the Members Council

THE BENEFITS

- More local member involvement through county representatives
- Members in control of business at Members Council
- Communication with members improved
- Postal members have a voice

But some things stay the same:

- Branch membership is unchanged
- Branch members continue to manage their own business and activities
- Branch members decide their own subscription

A consultation document will be issued, followed by regional meetings to inform members about the changes, to explain the process for consultation and invite feedback. This will give a picture of how branches view change and the extent of support before decisions are reached at the AGM next year.

Joining things together

As well as the structural changes, the way forward proposes small changes which will help with member involvement and improve links between the membership and the trustees.

These include:

- **The chair or vice chair of the trustees will be invited to attend meetings of the Members Council.**
- **The chair of the Members Council will attend the Board of Trustees.**
- **Some board meetings will be held outside London. Limited numbers of pre-booked members may attend as observers.**



Setting out the vision – to meet the challenge of change

The changes proposed are a complete change of culture and attitude, John Rostill told members at Manchester. But it is evolution, not revolution

“We want to become more democratic and say we are a members’ organisation and members have to have a hand in all parts of the organisation at all times. I want us to show that not only are we part of the same family, but we are working on the same agenda and going forward making a future together. I want a situation where ideas come from the floor. Not top down, but bottom up.”

If the plans are approved, counties in England will form the basis of the Fellowship. Branches in each county elect a county representative. County representatives elect a regional representative who becomes a member of the new Members Council chaired by one of its own members. The chair of the council can attend board meetings.

“These changes may seem minor, but they are a significant change in approach and culture, giving more members the chance to take part in the wider activities of the Fellowship. The members council sets its own agenda and becomes the principal advisory body to the trustees.

The Fellowship will also be aiming to develop the improvements in communication already delivered through regional newsletters and the Chief Executive’s monthly letter, which has been well received.

Your chance to influence the future

All the proposals in the way forward, including the county based structure and the regional boundaries, are ideas for discussion.

There is to be a genuine consultation exercise, starting with a series of regional meetings over the next few months when members of the Future Group will be explaining the details and listening to views.

The hope is that as many members as possible will be able to attend the meetings and respond to the proposals and report back to their branches, so that the consultation is spread widely.

“What we want to do is get a general view of how members feel about the proposals, and the concerns they might have before final proposals are put to a vote later in 2022” said John Rostill, Chief Executive.

The new structure in detail

The Fellowship will have a changed structure for leadership and communication if the proposals are approved at the next AGM. Here’s a summary of what each tier will do.

What the trustees do

Being a trustee is a voluntary role. Board members bring their experience and ideas to help lead the Fellowship to meet the challenges ahead.

The Fellowship’s board includes the chairman (George Kempton) the vice chairman (Chris Kitchin) and the treasurer (Paul Farenden), six members nominated by the Members Council and five co-opted external trustees.

The main duties of the trustees are:

- To make sure the Fellowship, as a charity, does what it was set up to do by planning ahead and explaining how activities support its purpose
- To make sure the Fellowship complies with its own rules and charity law
- To decide what best enables the Fellowship to carry out its purpose, making balanced and informed decisions for short and long term
- Make sure the charity’s money is only used in the right way and avoid undue risk. That means having procedures and safeguards and making sure they are followed

“Trustees give us leadership and help us to plan ahead” said Chief Executive John Rostill. “All of them have valuable experience that we benefit from. The board is accountable to the Fellowship as a whole for its decisions and aims to be as open as possible about the issues raised and the action taken.”

What a Regional Representative does

Another voluntary role which is intended to support branches, but also to represent the membership and work with the development officer to increase membership.

This is done by:

- occasional visits
- circulating news to members
- explaining central guidance and instructions
- developing opportunities for members and branch officers to exchange views and ideas
- working in partnership with development officers to support branches in need
- acting to develop the Fellowship in line with its strategy

What a County Representative does

Like most other roles in the Fellowship, this is unpaid except for expenses.

The purpose is to support branches, express local views to national bodies and work with others to increase membership.

They will do this by:

- Keeping in touch through visits, emails, zoom or phone
- Circulating news to members
- Developing opportunities for members and branch officers to exchange views and ideas
- Working in partnership with other membership representatives to support branches in need

Possible grouping of counties into new regions

1. Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear. Population 3.4 million
2. East Riding, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire. Population 5.4 million
3. Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside. Population 6.7 million
4. Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland. Population 4.3 million
5. Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Warwickshire, Worcestershire. Population 5.8 million
6. Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Wiltshire. Population 3.6 million
7. Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire. Population 4.9 million
8. Cambridgeshire, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk. Population 4.3 million
9. Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset. Population 4.5 million
10. East Sussex, Surrey, West Sussex, Kent. Population 4.7 million.
11. Greater London. Population 9.3 million



SOME QUESTIONS to consider

1. *Do you support the need for change?*
2. *Would the 'county basis' help the role of Member Representatives?*
3. *Should postal members have a voice?*
4. *Do you agree that the [Members] Council should be chaired by one of its own?*
5. *Some Board of Trustees meetings to be held outside of London?*
6. *Members should be able to observe Board of Trustees meetings?*

Each county would have a county representative and each region one regional member of the national Members Council. London would have two regional members, one for each side of the Thames. Postal members would have two representatives on the Members Council, which would have a total membership of 17. Names of regions would be decided later.

Arrangements for Scotland (5.4 million) and Wales (3.2 million) are being studied separately.

Meet the new trustees



Janine Brooks

Janine Brooks, brings an extensive career in dentistry, leadership and management as she joins the team setting the strategic direction of the organisation.

After a successful career in NHS dentistry she is now a coach/mentor and educator with her own consultancy in addition to many roles in professional bodies, university teaching and charities. She has received the MBE for services to dentistry. Joining the Fellowship on top of a busy life was not a difficult decision. "I am at a stage in life where I can choose which things interest me. Things which are important to do and I can do" she said

"Life just doesn't get boring. I also enjoy digging around in genealogy, walking and being a trustee for my local village hall." Janine and her "long suffering" husband John are also classic car enthusiasts and last summer organised their third successful classic car event in the village where they live near Watford Gap services.



Suzy Brain England

Suzy Brain England has added being a trustee of the Fellowship to a busy life which includes being chair of Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust and chair of Keep Britain Tidy.

She has previously held a number of non-executive roles in the NHS and was also awarded the OBE for public service following her work as chair of the Department of Work and Pensions Standards Committee (Decision making and appeals). She is a member of the Institute of Directors Standards Committee.

"I like what the Fellowship does" she said. "I think there is something really important about how people manage their retirement. In the NHS people work together in a team. I can see the Fellowship means we can still have that relationship and stay active. That's what retirement needs to be."



John Mosley

John Mosley retired in 2014 after 30 years as a consultant surgeon in Manchester which followed 15 years in training grades including research jobs in the USA and Australia.

Retirement hasn't slowed him down. He has learned to play the piano, he plays more golf, he's a senior fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and he's joined things including a walking group and the Fellowship.

"I think it is an excellent organisation. It's very sad that people don't know about it," he said. "When it was set up the NHS was very hospital based. Now a lot is done in the community and we need to reach those retirees." He is married, with three daughters, and lives in Manchester.



Mark Bagnall

Mark Bagnall took early retirement nine years ago after a career in youth work, teaching and for the bulk of his working life, training, and development in a National Voluntary Organisation. Mark worked in Higher Education as part of his training and development role.

Since retirement Mark has set up his own business in coaching, training, and consultancy. This allows him the flexibility to go walking and develop his photography skills in the beautiful County Durham where he has lived for 36 years. He is currently working with a rural community offering support to older people as well as looking for the gaps in provision for this age group.

"I was recently introduced to the Fellowship and was immediately drawn to what it does and what it could do. I hope to contribute to its development" he said.

Wendy steps down

Wendy Lindley has retired from being a trustee after six years in the role. "I have enjoyed it" she said. "I shall miss it, although it has been difficult at times. We had to make some hard decisions to protect the future of the Fellowship. We have to work together to keep it going."



the Fellowship was re-structured. "Doing things for the Fellowship is such a good thing" she said."

Above:
Wendy at the heritage exhibition in Salisbury where she was part of the team that staged the event.

Wendy joined Salisbury branch when she retired from her job managing local health centres and was soon chosen as secretary, and then became a regional representative before joining the trustees when the leadership of

Get ready now for recruitment

Branches could start making preparations soon to respond to approaches from potential new members after the recruitment campaign next April, chairman Margaret Moffat suggested in her last report to the AGM.

A leaflet is going out to over a million former NHS staff with the yearly pension information, encouraging them to join us. "This is our big chance" she said "maybe after Christmas you could start making preparations."

Margaret has been chairman for four years – longer than usual because of Covid.

"It has been a pleasure and a privilege meeting so many of you and working with so many great people. I know we are all in very safe and capable hands."

Could you be a trustee?

Wendy's resignation creates a vacancy for a new trustee who is a member of the Fellowship. Members interested should write to Central Office by 13 December 2021.

The Chief Executive will be happy to talk through the responsibilities and eligibility criteria, but the main duties are to manage the business and look after the finances. A trustee needs an understanding of the charity's purposes and how the charity benefits its members. He or she also has an individual and collective responsibility to ensure that the charity complies with its registration certificate and with charity law.

Trustees are not paid and if appointed you will be expected to attend three board meetings a year, become a member of at least one of the sub-committees, take an active interest in the activities of the Fellowship and be visible to the members.

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Who can join us?

The Fellowship is reminding branches that membership is open to people who have provided voluntary services to the NHS, not just to those who were employed in it.

Broadly, membership is available to anyone who worked in a health care related job or is a volunteer in that context.

That includes:

- Anyone who worked in the NHS, anywhere in the UK
- Anyone who worked in social care
- Anyone who worked in a contracted out service
- Their spouses or partners

And: anyone that the branch wishes to include, such as people who have given valuable service to the Fellowship, but are not NHS retirees, or the widow or widower of NHSRF members.



Dennis Parker, a longstanding member of Basildon and Thurrock branch, has been awarded a fourth bar to his service gold medal award recognising 80 years of service to the St John Ambulance.

St John award recognises lifetime of service

Dennis and his wife Thelma, who joined the Fellowship in 1996, are now unable to attend branch meetings, but remain much loved members. He joined St John

Ambulance as a cadet in 1941 at the age of 14. At the age of 16 he was on his first shift at the Ritz Cinema in Grays when his shift was interrupted and he was sent to Tilbury to help unload a hospital ship.

Rising through the ranks over many years, Dennis achieved the ranks of

chairman, president and treasurer. In the 1990s he was Commander of Essex, and a Knight of the Order of St John. In 1977 Dennis was appointed a justice of the Peace, he has also been vice chairman of a local antique club. In 2002 he was presented with an MBE by Prince Charles.

In July Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex presented Dennis with the '4th bar to the service gold medal', at a ceremony in Danbury. Dennis is now retiring from Sandon branch Pitsea after 80 years' service.

New champion for North Wales

North Wales members and branches now have a new champion in Angela Johnson who has just started work as development officer for the Fellowship.



She is the first in a new post (John Toman was previously development officer for the whole of Wales) which aims to help the Fellowship open new branches, increase membership and build good relationships with NHS organisations.

Angela retired early in 2020 as Strategic Recruitment and Workforce planning lead for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board,

responsible for workforce planning and recruitment strategy.

"I am really enthusiastic about my new role" she said. "It is only one day a week but if I can make a difference to the Fellowship, I really want to do that. Attracting new members is a way of saying 'thank you' to a previous generation of people who helped to build the NHS."

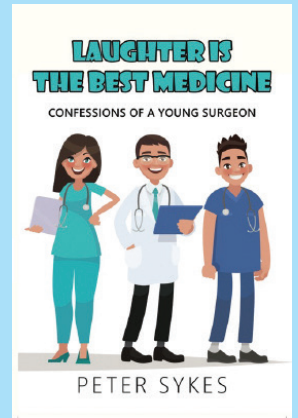
Like many others, Angela had not heard of the Fellowship until recently, when she came across it during lockdown. She now plans to use her experience which includes work in customer care, recruitment and communication in both

the private sector and the NHS to promote the organisation and increase its attractions for recently retired staff.

Until retirement, a busy life restricted opportunities for outside activities, but she has since discovered a love for gardening and cooking, walking and keeping fit. She lives with her husband in Llanarmon yn Ial, near Mold.

To contact Angela please go to:
northwales@nhsrf.org.uk
or tel:
07850 011249.

Above:
Angela quickly made friends with members of the Coventry branch at the Manchester conference.



Former surgeon's book tells of early days

The Fellowship's prolific author, former surgeon Peter Sykes has published another of his light-hearted novels which raise money for local hospices (St Ann's in Cheadle and North Cheshire).

"Laughter is the best medicine" is a collection of 30 short medical stories which tells of the training of a slightly naïve young trainee surgeon viewed through the experiences of patients as he embarks on this most challenging of careers. We share his joy when things go well, his anguish when they don't and learn that, at the end of the day, compassion and a sense of humour make wonderful medicine.

Peter was a consultant surgeon in the NHS for 25 years, later becoming medical director of the NHS Trust which won a UK Medical Management Team of the Year award. In recent years he has swapped his scalpel for a pen and recorded some of his life's experience in light hearted and enjoyable books – proving a "novel" way to raise money for worthwhile charities.

Further details from:
www.medicaltales.org

Canal trip gives chance to meet

Twenty five members and guests of East Hertfordshire branch took a trip along the Grand Union canal – with some members braving the weather to steer the boat, while others took the opportunity to exercise along the tow path. A bring and share lunch provided a good meal, and the visitors washed up! “If you are near a waterway this type of outing is a good opportunity to meet each other and prospective members” said chairman Chris Kitchin.



East Surrey reach 40

Forty members of East Surrey branch met in July for a delayed celebration of its fortieth anniversary.

The branch was founded in February 1981, so the celebration had to wait for lockdown restrictions to be lifted. It was the first time the whole branch had been together after lockdowns began. The event also remembered four members who had died since March 2020. Members funded the event in memory of Bob Eden, who delighted in organising and setting up such events.

Gillian Francis-Musanu, Director of Corporate Affairs at Surrey & Sussex NHS Trust, represented the trust’s Chief Executive Michael Wilson, who is honorary president of the branch. Gillian acknowledged the links between the branch and the trust and wished it a successful future.

Above: Branch chair Joan Robinson cuts the birthday cake, watched by Gillian Francis-Musanu, Director of Corporate Affairs at Surrey & Sussex NHS Trust



John leaves his “best ever” job

The Manchester conference was the last as an officer for John Toman, who retired officially from a job which has been...

...“*an absolute joy and the best job I ever had.*”

John had a career in nursing, nurse management and general management in the NHS, before working in the Welsh Office establishing NHS Trusts and then leading a health care consultancy.

His involvement with the Fellowship began when the then director Roger Stokoe asked him to help find a development officer for Wales. “I could not find anybody, so I thought I could do it for a couple of years” he said. “Including being Business Manager it ended up as 16.”

During that time the number of branches in Wales increased and in his later role he has raised thousands of pounds in income from sponsorship. John plans to continue his membership, but he is ceasing all other duties, including the successful golf tournament which in future will be run by Isle of Wight Tours.

Norma promotes the Fellowship

Norma Garthwaite a member of Edinburgh branch has helped to get the Fellowship better known through an article in the newsletter for volunteers at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

Norma volunteers at the hospital and she told the newsletter that volunteering and the Fellowship had both proved very enjoyable and worthwhile. She explained what the Fellowship does and Hilary Robb, Development Officer for the Fellowship in Scotland added more detail about the vibrant Edinburgh branch which has 150 members. Norma added:

“*We are friendly and informal, and you may meet former friends and colleagues, or find new ones.*”

Danny Lyons – a remarkable life serving others

Many East Surrey members knew Danny Lyons as a warm and friendly gentleman who welcomed and greeted members and speakers and an active member of the committee. But his death in May revealed a rich life of helping others.

Danny, the youngest of twelve children, grew up in County Clare. He came to England aged 17 to work and train as a nurse. After qualifying as SRN in Leeds, he did 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 nuclear bombs. At the end of his service, he

received a commendation for outstanding zeal and devotion to duty. But as he pointed out, 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 as Assistant Director of Nursing at Warlingham Park Hospital in 1991, having worked in the NHS for 42 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 advertisement 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, he 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.

Danny didn't only travel to Romania. 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, he received the award of MBE from the Queen for his charity work. 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.'



Obituaries

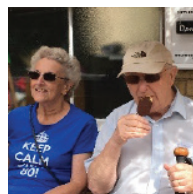
Mike Lockett

Michael (Mike) Lockett was a member of the Gordano branch for more than 20 years and saw membership grow from about 30 members to over 100.

He was a very jolly person who was pleased to join in any activity. His large personality and enormous laugh could shake the building. He often entertained members with jokes, ditties and even pantomime acts at Christmas dinners.

Mike was chairman for more than ten years and always opened meetings with a welcome and a joke or a poem. He entertained the committee in his house and held the meeting together to ensure a proactive group with good forward planning. His jolly, light spirit

and honest nature accompanied with his desire to help others will always be remembered indeed, his larger-than-life personality will be sorely missed.



Audrey Allaker

East Hertfordshire members are missing Audrey Allaker, who gave many years of leadership and support to the branch over many years.

Audrey worked as a secretary in the X-Ray Department at the QE11 Hospital in Welwyn Garden City from 1973 to 1990. When retirement from work came early due to Menieres disease she joined the newly formed East Hertfordshire branch and within a year became its secretary, a post she held for 13 years.

During this time Audrey supported her late husband, Don (seen together here). He organised many holidays and day trips. Audrey worked tirelessly and then became branch chairman for a further six years. She dedicated much of her time and support to the members, retiring from that role when Don became ill. The branch was so much part of her life for so many years and members will always be grateful for her guidance.

**Barbara Powell**

It is with much sadness that the Mid Sussex branch reports the passing of Barbara Powell in May, aged 85. In her 38 year career in nursing and midwifery Barbara began with nurse training in Chertsey followed by midwifery training in Glasgow before becoming a Queen's District Nurse in East London. She then held senior posts in Sussex and was Director of Midwifery for Mid Downs Health Authority between 1983 and 1992, followed by six years as a Matron in a residential care home in Norfolk and as a residential nursing manager in Hampshire before retiring in 1998 and returning to Haywards Heath.

Barbara then joined Mid Sussex branch where she was welfare officer for five years and then chairman for 11. She lived her life in accordance with her deep Christian faith. As well as being an excellent teacher and organiser she was kind and thoughtful to everyone she met. Barbara will be remembered with great affection by all those who had the privilege to have known her.

**Dr Frances Rogers**

Frances Rogers, an active member and current chair of Huddersfield and Calderdale branch, who contributed to her community in many ways, died in June after a long illness.

She trained as a nurse in Huddersfield then did obstetric training in Wakefield

qualified as a health visitor. During her career as a health visitor she was involved in a car accident which left her with severe whiplash injuries leading to her early retirement. She used her experience of injury, trauma and psychological impact to gain a doctorate.

She became a psychotherapist and worked in family therapy doing home visits for Barnado's. She lectured in psychology and counselling at Barnsley College and Oldham and was a volunteer for Samaritans. Frances played the cornet in the Clifton and Lightcliffe Band for many years. She did volunteer work in Nepal and recently volunteered at Scargill House, a Christian Centre in North Yorkshire.

**Michael Thompson**

It is with great sadness Norwich and District branch report that Michael Thompson died in July after a long illness. His wife Margaret, the branch secretary, encouraged him to join the branch where he enjoyed being a member joining in activities, telling jokes and tales and having a laugh with the men at the back of the hall. In his later years he loved dancing, DIY and cruise holidays. His love of the sea came from when he served in the Merchant Navy.

Mary Verrier

Members of Cosham branch are saddened to report the death of their president, Mrs Mary Verrier. Mary trained as a State Registered Nurse at St Mary's Hospital, Portsmouth, and was to work there in a range of roles, leading finally to being the Night Superintendent. She was awarded

the Gold Medal as Best Nurse of the year at the end of her training, and she applied herself to maintaining her influence and experience for her long career which followed.

Mary was a very active member of the Royal College of Nursing, and in 1969 she represented the Portsmouth Branch at the International Congress of Nurses in Canada.

Mary spent many years as a member and then chairman of Cosham branch and was elected life-long president in recognition of her services, a role she fulfilled with energy and vision. She died peacefully in March.

Blue Light deals or NHS retirees

Retired NHS staff are now able to access the Blue Light Card, a discount service for the emergency services, NHS, social care and the armed forces.

Blue Light Card has over two million members and 15,000 partner retailers and offers discounts on restaurants, holidays, days out and online and in store shopping. Members can buy a card, valid for two years, for £4.99. Blue Light Card

Chief Executive Tom Dalby said: "With the help of our partners, we would like to recognise the hard work of all retired NHS staff. Wherever you worked, we thank you for your service."

To register visit:

www.bluelightcard.co.uk
and select "Retired NHS" in the trust/division drop down menu to get started.

A P60 showing an NHS pension is required as a valid form of ID.

Adventurous? Try *champing* for a change



Shirley Brown clutches her hot water bottle as she settles down for the night

For further information visit www.visitchurches.org.uk or search for Churches Conservation Trust

Adventurous members on the look out for something new may wish to think about *champing* – tried successfully by intrepid members of Liverpool branch in the summer.

Marie Dewhurst, branch secretary explained: “Members slept in a 14th century church, courtesy of the Churches Conservation Trust who run a “champing” programme in many of their churches, using the fees to support the work of maintaining the fascinating buildings.”

They went to St Leonards in Old Langho, Lancashire which was completed in 1557. The church is full of stonework carvings and medieval glass plus a set of carved late 17th century bench ends.

It is deconsecrated so no danger of startling the vicar in your pyjamas.

Members offer some **do's** and **don'ts** for sleeping in an ancient building with no running water or heating:

Do bring a warm sleeping bag: the camp beds and hot water bottles provided are a comfort, but nothing beats a duvet. But don't bring your slinky negligee, you will just slide onto the stone floor

Do bring your favourite alcoholic tittle to sup by the light of the tilly lamps.

Don't drink whiskey, listen to the songs of Robbie Burns and start a sing along complete with Scottish country dancing, (well you can if you want to)

Do explore, enjoy the atmosphere and soak up the history.

Do laugh, switch off from the outside world, enjoy the peace and quiet and the company of friends in a truly magical place.

Marie added:

" We would definitely recommend this for a different type of camping."



Back to the old days

Oxford members enjoyed a return to the old days on a visit to Oxford Bus Museum near Oxford.

The museum has a collection of vehicles which take you back to the age of the charabanc and include many of the different generations of service buses. One of the volunteers on duty was a

driver from the coach company the branch uses for outings, who offered immediately to get a bus out and take members on a ride – complete with a ticket collector.

Can you write a short story?



A short story competition was launched at the conference with a cash prize to be awarded at next year's event.

The idea comes from Peter Sykes, a retired surgeon who has written many books himself. He will be joined by two other judges to decide the winner.

The challenge is to write a story of not more than 1500 words on a healthcare related topic.

The story may be fact or fiction. Entry is free and multiple entries will be

accepted. Ideally it should be typed and double spaced. The author's name should not appear on the story, but please send an accompanying note. The deadline is 30 April 2022 and the winner will be announced at the conference.

Entries should be sent to central office either by post (see address below left) or by email: info@nhsrf.org.uk.