

# Fellowship

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

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Patron:  
Ken Jarrold CBE

## Tributes pour in for much-loved Ethel

**Tributes have poured in from all over the country in memory of the Fellowship's much-loved patron Ethel Armstrong, who died on 6 August, two days after her 90th birthday.**

Throughout her years as a member Ethel was an encouraging, engaging, enthusiastic, warm-hearted passionate personality, who never missed a chance to sing the praises of our Fellowship. At different times she took on almost every role possible: branch chairman, regional representative, chairman, president, chairman of the benevolent fund and finally patron. She was awarded a richly deserved MBE in 2018, the year she became an instant success on TV, radio and newspapers as part of the celebrations of the seventieth anniversary of the NHS.

### A privilege to know

Ken Jarrold, her fellow patron said: "Knowing Ethel and working with her was one of the greatest



privileges of my life. She was a very able woman with a distinguished career in the NHS and an outstanding record of service to the Fellowship. However, it is Ethel the person who will always live with me: generous, warm,

good fun, the first and often the last on the dance floor.

"Ethel was one of very few people who lit up the room. It's an over-used phrase, but in Ethel's case it was true. In a crowded room you could always find Ethel

because she created a circle of warmth, laughter and joy around her."

### Continued energy

Chairman Margaret Moffat said: "Ethel was Ethel to us. She did not need a surname. She was known by all for her enthusiasm, friendliness, and continued energy, travelling miles and miles to visit all who invited her.

"She was our patron, but she looked upon us as her family, with her as a kindly great aunt, always watchful, sometimes critical, but also encouraging and always ready with a helping hand."

### Passion

Her love of the NHS and its staff and all it stood for was the central theme of her life and shaped her retirement with passion, dedication and service. She dedicated her MBE to the thousands of staff she had worked with and added: "The NHS is part of who I am.

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*Above: Ethel Armstrong MBE*



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](http://www.nhsrf.org.uk)





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It's a particular honour to receive this in the year that the NHS turns 70. I see this as a nod to all the special people I have had the privilege of working for."

Ethel began her NHS career as a cadet nurse in a mental health hospital in Newcastle upon Tyne. Once she was 18 she joined the school of radio diagnosis on the same day as the birth of the NHS. She worked mostly in the developing fields of radiography and radiotherapy and following marriage to Harry she worked in many different NHS organisations as they moved with his job.

When she retired in 1989 she returned to County Durham and launched herself into voluntary roles with the same passion and dedication, including becoming a governor of two NHS Foundation Trusts. She worked tirelessly for the Fellowship, clocking up thousands of miles to visit branches. Looking back over her 70 year NHS journey she told conference delegates in 2018: "It's been a long road, but I have got there. And the passion remains. It's what floats my boat."

Fellowship patron Ken Jarrold spoke movingly of Ethel in a eulogy at her funeral on 26 August at Lanchester All Saints' Church. Leading members and the Chief Executive also attended.



Ethel never missed the chance of telling the top brass about our Fellowship. NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens is the one receiving the message this time.



Ethel in Westminster Abbey for the service to mark the NHS 70th birthday. Who else could wear a show stopping jacket, a well-deserved medal and a smile to welcome everyone?



"Always the first on the dance floor" – Ethel's sparkle lit up any occasion.



Ethel with Sir John Burn, chairman of Newcastle Hospitals in 2019 at the start of plans for a new Fellowship branch.



Ethel's cakes were legendary. This one was for Martin Davis and Jaki when Martin retired from being treasurer.



Ethel was 90 on 4 August, when it was her turn to receive a cake.



At conference 2019 with Dorothy McDonald (who died earlier this year). The bond of Fellowship is plain to see.



Ethel's travels took her all over the country, wherever she was invited. She used to joke that she was best friends with the night porter at her local railway station. Here she is in Huddersfield, in Wales and at Guy's and St Thomas's.



# Members feature in BBC documentary

**Two members from St George's, Merton and Wandsworth branch were featured in a BBC documentary repeated recently as part of the NHS 72 celebrations.**

Lynette Richards-Lorde was the first black nursing officer and Carmen Brooks-Johnson, a midwife, was involved as part of the NHS 70 celebrations after taking part in the oral history project run by Manchester University to capture the voices of the NHS.

Carmen was born in Jamaica and came to England in the 1960s. She began her NHS career with nurse training in Rochester, later becoming a midwifery sister in Bromley, and then taking charge of the delivery suite at St George's, Tooting. She later moved into the community where she remained until she retired. In 2008 she opened the Carmen Suite, a ward at St George's, of which she is rightly very proud.

She said taking part in the documentary "brought back memories, some good and others not so - however, for the first time, I was given the opportunity to talk about my experiences and it was a privilege to do so."

Lynette became involved after two producers who had seen a magazine article from about 1980 about her promotion to the top midwifery job in Wandsworth and contacted her during Black History Month in 2017. She was taken around some of her old departments and wards and even met a baby who she had delivered many

years earlier who was named Lynette after her.

She came to England from Guyana at the age of 19 in 1959 and said: "An odd question was asked by one of the UK students, who asked me if my house in Guyana was in a tree? The salary was a shock. At the end of the first month, all I received was £9. I sent £5 to my parents in Guyana and was left with £4 a month for the first year." She completed her nurse training in 1962 and her midwifery training the following year. A varied career followed which culminated in her being appointed director of nursing and midwifery with Wandsworth Health Authority.

She said: "It is important that the younger generation and people who live in this country know that we were encouraged to come to the UK to provide nursing and in return receive what was regarded as the best nurse training in the world. I think the film should be shown in schools, in community groups who bring about awareness of the contribution made."

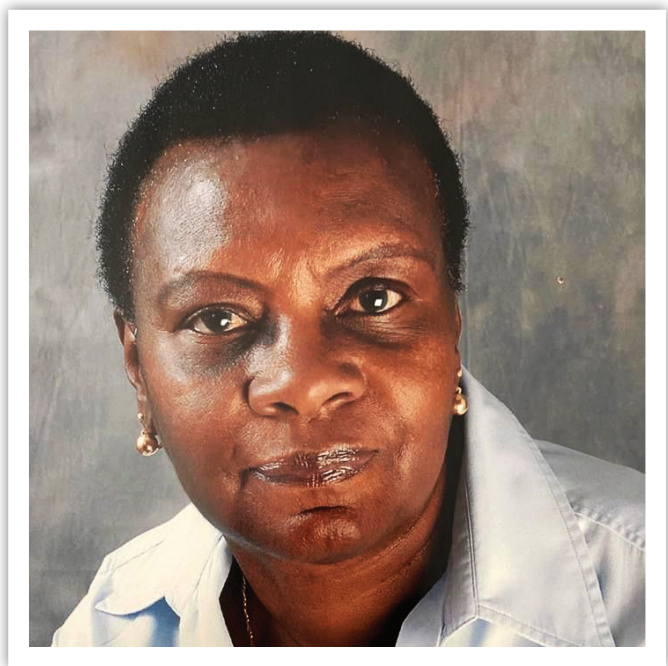
During lockdown, Lynette has been stranded in Barbados. Carmen has been helping to support members. She added: "I love being a member of the Fellowship. For me it is like being a part of a happy, friendly extended

family." By coincidence, the cameraman was Bernard Kelly the son of Maggie Kelly, a Fellowship member.



**Above:** Lynette Richards-Lorde as a student nurse

**Below:** Carmen Brooks-Johnson



## Is the pandemic a turning point? asks John Rostill

**The increase in community spirit and a greater willingness to volunteer evident during lockdown could encourage former NHS staff to join the Fellowship.**

That's the hope expressed by Chief Executive John Rostill as we look ahead to the days when life resumes something like normality.

"We should not assume that the future is dictated by the past" he said. "The age profile of our members continues to rise and we have been somewhat unsuccessful in attracting people who have recently retired.



"That could change as a direct result of the pandemic. The enhanced profile of the NHS and the camaraderie among staff has been reinforced during these exceptional times. I am confident that the willingness to volunteer and

the increase in community spirit will help to encourage former employees to join.

"In turn we need to make sure that we are no longer an anonymous organisation. Our aim over the next few years must be

that nobody in the NHS is able to say 'I have never heard of you.' We need to give NHS staff time to recuperate from gruelling times, but we need to make a major onslaught so that it becomes almost automatic that people join us when they retire."

That also means looking at our traditional structure to make sure it is fit for purpose. "If we were to start the Fellowship now, would it be organised in the same way? Should we plan to continue with 9,000 members or should we be looking at hundreds or even thousands of new members responding to our campaign?"

## Members Zoom in with PM for NHS birthday

**Two of our senior members were delighted to be invited to take part in a special Zoom call with the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, to mark the 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday of the NHS.**

The Fellowship was approached by Number 10 and NHS England to see if we could find two staff who had been in the NHS at its beginning who would be willing to take part.

Number 10 said that speaking with Monica Peters and Barbara Baker was the highlight of the Prime Minister's day and he had "genuinely loved" speaking with them and found the conversation fascinating. He wrote lots of notes throughout the conversation, which lasted more than an hour and a half. A two minute clip was

shared on social media by the Prime Minister's office.

Monica, from the East Surrey branch, said it was a real highlight for her whilst Barbara, from the Eastbourne branch, described it as "an incredible honour."

Chief Executive John Rostill said: "This was an amazing opportunity for the Fellowship to raise our profile and we were grateful to Monica and Barbara for their help, and delighted they had such a wonderful experience."

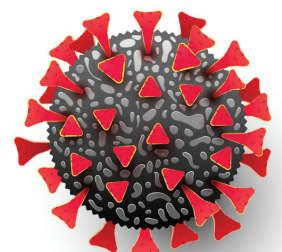
## Advice on meeting safety

**A risk management and safeguards summary which gives clear advice on re-starting meetings and events has been issued to all branches.**

Drawn from government guidelines, it sets out as simply as possible the steps needed to make sure everyone stays safe with a checklist to help the process.

It is the work of Project Officer Bob Middleton and Trustee Chris Kitchin and sets out good practice on social distancing, hygiene and face coverings, drinks and food (don't serve them), cleaning and hygiene, toilets and washing, signs and posters and advice to keep the noise down: if you have to shout it could spread the virus.

Branches which do meet should keep a record for 21 days of who was there to help NHS test and trace if necessary. Each branch will need to make its own assessment of the venue, whether meetings can take place safely within the guidelines, and any updated government guidance.





# Fellowship Officers go the extra mile

Throughout lockdown, Fellowship officers have continued to support members and branches as well as facing lockdown challenges themselves. We caught up with them to find out how things are going.



**Hilary Robb**  
Development Officer for Scotland

Hilary has produced digital newsletters sent to members every month, compiled a printed newsletter to all Scottish members, kept in touch with key contacts in the Scottish Government (funders), co-ordinated sewing for the NHS by members and distributed the items to hospitals and ambulance depots.

She also worked with NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government to provide them with material for the 72<sup>nd</sup> celebrations to ensure the voice of Scotland was represented, and has spoken on the phone with members who are shielding and branch officers.

"I have been delighted with the way we have all come together and shared information and advice and the positive reaction from branches and members. I have received lovely emails and comments from people – it has highlighted to me the importance of a friendly voice. This has been a humbling experience and we really are all in it together" she said. "I'm looking forward to being able to meet people face to face and I want to capitalise on the feel good factor

towards the NHS to try to recruit new members and open new branches." Hilary was diagnosed with type two diabetes just before lockdown and so at increased risk from Covid. During lockdown she has lost 7kg by dieting and changing eating habits, started running and been exercising with Joe Wicks. "As a result, I have energy for the first time in two years" she said. "I have had two close family bereavements and I am seeing my mum in a care home for 30 minutes at the end of July for the first time since February."



**Sally Bundock**  
Development Officer for London and the South East

Sally has spoken with each of her 60+ branches and has produced a fortnightly newsletter for members. As well as the popular live talks (see page 12) she has been keeping in contact with members in Ipswich area where we hope to open a new branch and maintaining contact with Canterbury Hospital where we have plans for a new branch.

"I have been pleased to learn how well branches are keeping in touch

with their members and supporting each other and I've been very pleased with the positive comments about South East News and the live talks. I'm looking forward to getting back to visiting branches and opening new branches. During lockdown, I have done lots of gardening, walking and writing stories for the grandchildren."



**Debbie Arnold**  
Administrator, Central Office

"I have been responding to calls from members, often on routine matters, but the conversations tended to last longer than usual and I felt it was important to call everyone who left a message even if they didn't ask for a callback. I really enjoyed taking time to talk with these members and had some lovely chats where I felt I had made a difference to their day.

I've been responding to email queries quickly (including in the evening and sometimes at weekends) as again I wanted to demonstrate that Central Office would go 'above and beyond' to help."

Debbie has also been keeping the website and facebook up to

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date, organising zoom practices for trustees, and – an unexpected outcome of lockdown - uploading hundreds of email addresses of members who want to be contacted in that way. Plus sending out new member cards and packs, organising meetings, including agendas and minutes, and many other tasks.



### Bob Middleton Project Manager

Bob has developed a bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund around reducing isolation and increasing connectivity in Greater Manchester and a larger bid for the Fellowship centrally. He also worked with the Heritage Project team to re-plan events cancelled in 2020, hopefully for spring 2021 onwards. As part of this he has been working with Karen Kennedy on innovation in member recruitment and new branch formation.

"I've been really impressed with the resilience and endeavour of the Fellowship but I'm looking forward to starting up again to tell the heritage and recruitment joint stories and approaches" he said.

"At home I built a wooden gazola in the garden (a cross between a gazebo and a pergola) from scratch and I have transformed our old running network into a UK Athletics affiliated running club."



### Sherry Smith Administrative Officer, Central Office

Sherry has had an unfortunate lockdown after a fall in which she broke her wrist and finished up with it encased in plaster. She has valiantly returned to work, but found typing with one finger both tedious and time consuming. Digital mobility increased with time as more fingers loosened up, but she was looking forward to having the plaster off at the end of August.



### Paul Pople Development Officer, South West England

My first priority was to speak to all branches to ensure there were no members who might be isolated or unable to get provisions or medicine and offer to help branches that were finding this hard to manage.

## Going the extra mile

"I was delighted by the response as all branches were already doing this, in some cases recruiting extra welfare officers and had a line of communication to all members, especially those who were older or who lived alone. It was a wonderful example of fellowship in action."

The next initiative was to follow Sally's example from the South East and write newsletters for the South West that would pass on information, ideas for activities and a bit of light humour. The feedback was very positive. They also went to postal members who had signed up for email contact.

Paul also recruited a new member who had been clearing old paperwork in lockdown and came across the leaflet that she got on retirement and dropped him a line.

"The major difference to my life during lockdown was that my London based daughters returned to Dorset. That was super but they are now back in the not so smoky city."

### Kay Robinson Finance Officer

Kay converted her spare room into an office for nine weeks with an up turned bed and two wall papering tables, a chair and boxes for the all the paraphernalia she needed. "My job is very routine, tasks are done on a day/weekly/monthly basis and keeping to strict timelines in a must"





she said. "I found working from home pretty cumbersome as I rely hugely on the post and the majority of the personal and financial files / information required are kept in the office under lock and key. Everything has taken three times longer due to bad server connections and the database was impossible to work on so I've worked far longer than my contracted hours. I am in no hurry to repeat working from a small bedroom for eight plus hours a day."

"I have been back in the office since 1 June and am a lot happier. I am looking forward to seeing both of my colleagues and being able to tackle occasional issues face to face instead of via email."



**Karen Kennedy**  
Development Officer, North West England

Karen telephoned all the branches in the North West and Yorkshire to see what support they needed and has done research and administration for possible reunions. She has also been active on the Fellowship's Facebook page as well as linking in with other NHS Facebook pages in the north west and she has developed and distributed newsletters to keep in touch with members.

She was involved with publicity for the Windrush celebrations and she has been working with a regional

representative on a report looking at data protection and gift aid as well as sharing information on how members can stay fit and healthy during lockdown. "I am looking forward to seeing branch members again" she said, "and confirming new dates for our heritage events and organising reunion events."

"My lockdown journey has enabled me to volunteer with the RVS/NHS Responders and as the weather has been kind this has enabled me to cycle more, finding so many places that I didn't know existed." Like others she has cleaned the house, painted a couple of rooms and added considerably to her garden and home with new plants.



**Lucia Hiden**  
Head of Communications and North East Development Officer

Lucia has maintained mainly email contact with branches in the North East as well as the Newcastle branch which was on the point of formally establishing when lockdown started. She has started to revisit opportunities with Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (the biggest in the country) around some exciting opportunities there.

"My main focus has been on communications" she said. "I've spent a lot of time developing the Facebook page. I developed and shared the

guidance on Zoom and I'm delighted with the response from branches.

"A highlight for me was facilitating the Zoom conversation between Boris Johnson and our members. I managed a last minute campaign to celebrate the NHS 72nd birthday and I've been working with Andrew Moss on the Fellowship newsletter and I take the lead for producing Fellowship Extra alongside John Toman. I've really enjoyed getting to know members more personally. It has been really rewarding and heartening and I'm very grateful for the support."

"I'm looking forward to reconnecting properly with the North East branches and I'm wanting to make sure we make the most of our P60 campaign (the leaflet with the pension documents) which we postponed until April 2021 and building on the reputation development work I've done with Downing Street and NHS England to see how we can take the Fellowship forward on that national level."

*"A highlight for me was facilitating the Zoom conversation between Boris Johnson and our members."*

**Wales** is without a development officer at the moment, but a quick review of branch newsletters suggests members are finding ways to keep in touch and remaining active.

# Branches turn to Zoom – and the open air



More and more branches are turning to Zoom to hold committee meetings to keep branches flourishing during these times.

**Newham, Kettering, Bromley, Gwent and Suffolk West are among the branches who are starting to turn to technology to keep in touch.**

Meanwhile Cheltenham branch took a very different approach

when nine members took a walk up a local beauty spot to get back in touch as well as enjoy some fresh air and sunshine and Yeovil had a socially distanced committee meeting in a local park.



**Top:** Cheltenham members headed for a local beauty spot to get back in touch

**Above:** Yeovil branch held a socially distanced committee meeting in a park



## Guidance on using Zoom

The Fellowship has produced guidance for members to help get to grips with Zoom: <https://nhsrf.org.uk/news/a-guide-to-using-zoom-for-members-and-branches/>

## Lowestoft members delight in clifftop meeting

Lowestoft branch members have come up with plans to hold meetings in the open air – and began with a successful clifftop meeting in August, attended by 18 members.

“In an idyllic setting overlooking the sea and a tea shop just across the road which supplied take away teas and coffees we each brought a chair and made a big circle” said member Dawn Rhodes.

*“Everyone was so happy to meet up. Next month we plan to get together in a park in north Lowestoft. No-one wants to go back into the hall in the near future.”*





# Members keep busy in lockdown

Fellowship members have been discovering new skills, meeting new challenges and taking on new voluntary roles in the pandemic. “Fellowship” records the experiences of some of them.



For **Elizabeth Williams**, chairman of North West Durham branch, lockdown became far from relaxing. Liz had been an emergency care practitioner at Shotley Bridge Hospital. “I was asked to return to work twice, but my son is an ITU consultant and his wife is a nurse and it made sense for me to take over the child care,” she said. She took charge of grandchildren aged six and 11 for three to five days at a time as shifts and hours changed – and that meant home schooling. “I think returning to work would have been easier” she said. “I enjoyed the extra time with the children but the 11 year-old’s maths was very testing.”

**Julia Mitchell**, a member of Huntingdon branch, has

been out and about on her bike raising money for her church’s chosen charity. She set herself a challenge to make the most of her daily exercise to cycle 1,000 miles in 90 days.

She was well over the 1,000 by the end. “It has kept me fitter and given me something to focus on” she said. “People think cycling is not for older people - but it does not matter how far or how fast you go, it’s about getting out there and enjoying it.”



**Cecilia Turpin** from Crawley and District branch learned a variety of new skills. A specialist in neonatal nursing, she retired in 2012. Since lockdown she has mastered Zoom and kept in touch with members. She has

been cleaning, gardening and walking, but she has also obtained “click and collect” fish and chips, used the drive through at Macdonalds and the pay as you go system in Sainsbury’s.



**Sue Williams**, from Walsall joined a new group which has an army of volunteers supporting local residents. “We have done shopping, collected and delivered prescriptions, manned the local foodbank, provided craft activity boxes for children and increased the numbers making befriending phone calls” she said. She was also involved in making bids for Covid grants, helping with DBS checks, writing a constitution and a guide for volunteers and delivering leaflets to every household in the area.

She has also been checking friends in the branch are OK, organising VE day celebrations and sewing washbags ear savers and masks for Walsall Trust – which prompted the Trust to send her a certificate which she was “chuffed to bits with.”



**Judith McMurray**, a member of Dundee branch, chairman of the Scottish Federation and one of the regional representatives from Scotland, volunteers as a “meeter and greeter” at Ninewells Hospital. During lockdown she has doubled her shifts, including delivering newspapers and items for patients not allowed visitors. “I am thoroughly enjoying it” she said. “I work alongside some teenagers volunteering for the first time and I am amazed at their social skills. Some of them are off to university to study medicine. I am sure this experience will stand them in good stead.”

*“People think cycling is not for older people - but it does not matter how far or how fast you go, it’s about getting out there and enjoying it.”*





**Dorothy McDonald**

Dorothy McDonald, a most committed and active member of Wolverhampton branch who contributed to her community in so many ways, died in April after contracting Covid-19.

Born in Kingston Jamaica in 1938 she came to England in 1957 to begin nurse training at New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton. After qualification she went on to qualify as a registered midwife, working on the wards and as a community midwife, mentoring and providing practical experience to student midwives. She studied and gained her teaching certificate in Liverpool and became a senior midwifery tutor playing a major part in the training and education of midwives in Wolverhampton.

Dorothy had to retire through ill health. She had a strong faith and remained very active in her local Baptist church and served on the executive committee of Age UK. She was one of the founding members of Wolverhampton Health Workers Fellowship branch and was a committed and active member from the beginning. At various times she was treasurer and fund raiser, and chairperson, she ran a weekly drop-in centre where members can drop in for a chat, coffee, food, exercise, craft work and social interaction. Latterly she took on the role of social activities co-ordinator arranging day trips and holidays.



**Above:** Dorothy in Sydney with Simone, granddaughter of fellow Wolverhampton member Etty Messam

Dorothy will be remembered by many for her warm and affectionate personality and loving care of others. In a tribute from the branch they write: "We are still coming to terms with the death of our dear friend. You will always be remembered with love."

### Ethel Pywell

Ethel Pywell who died in March, aged 96 was an active member in the Lowestoft area and attended a number of national conferences. She trained as a nurse in Hemel Hempstead during the second world war, but stopped full time nursing when her daughter was born in 1947. After the birth of her son, she was active in developing support for people with Down's syndrome at a time when there was really nothing.

She returned to nursing in the 1960s as a school nurse in Hertfordshire before moving to Lowestoft in 1973 where she was nurse to a large GP practice until she retired in 1983. She continued to be active in many areas including meals on wheels, hearing aid clinics and social activities and became chairman of

the management committee of the flats where she lived at the age of 90.



### Hilary Stone

Hilary Stone, a long standing and active member of Northampton branch died in May after a long illness. Hilary first trained as a nursery nurse then a registered nurse at Northampton General Hospital. She married in 1960 and had two children later working as a staff nurse at Harborough Road Hospital.

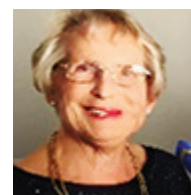
She went on to work as a school nurse for three years, then trained as a health visitor, working in the Northampton area for 13 years before retiring due to ill health in 1993. She became a deacon at Milton Malsor Baptist Church and volunteered with the Friends of Northampton General.

Hilary and her husband Brian joined Northampton

branch in 1995 and became active members, including being joint membership secretaries for 11 years. In 2017 she became seriously ill and was not expected to live. Mainly due to her deep Christian faith and devoted care from Brian she defied the odds and kept going despite many difficult times. She retained an interest in the branch to the end.

### Alan Bird

Warrington branch sadly reports the death of their much-loved member Alan Bird, whose wife Barbara was an NHS nurse. He joined the Fellowship when he retired from a career in civil engineering and supported his wife in her work for the branch, hosting garden parties and manning stalls. He was married to Barbara for 58 years and they were both nominated, with their friend Diane Wright, for the Fellowship's unsung hero award. Members miss his lovely smile and gentleness.



### Sylvia Hoan

Sylvia was a pioneer member of Eastbourne and District branch and sang its praises wherever she went. Sadly, in June she suffered a stroke, and joined her husband who she missed very much.

She worked in the postgraduate department of Eastbourne General Hospital for many years,



supervising the young doctors in training. The Fellowship was just finding its feet when she took on the job of branch secretary where her organising skills were perfect for the role. The walking group blossomed and holidays were arranged. She enjoyed bowling and was a fierce competitor and she spent many hours tending her garden. She leaves a daughter and two grandchildren. The branch has lost an active and very valued member.

**Philip Medway**

The Northern Devon Branch very sadly lost one of its longest serving members at the end of May. Philip Medway was one of the founding members and an enthusiastic member. He joined the NHS as a Finance Officer after service in the RAF working initially in South Devon before moving back to his birth place in North Devon. For many years

he was branch treasurer until ill health forced him to hand the role over but he continued for a number of years as the deputy treasurer. Although battling with ill health Philip was a regular attender at meetings where his sense of humour and natural friendliness was appreciated by all. He will be sadly missed, especially by the many members he persuaded to join the Fellowship.



**Jean England**

Jean England, who died in July aged 91, was a founder member of East Grinstead branch in 1998, becoming vice chairman and later chairman.

Jean joined the staff of

Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead in 1954, and became senior sister in charge of the male general and surgical ward, at one time also overseeing the casualty department. In 1988, with three other members of staff, she represented the hospital at a Buckingham Palace garden party, in recognition of her long and loyal service.

When she retired after 35 years Jean continued to have the hospital at her heart by arranging annual staff reunions. A well respected person by all who knew her and worked with her.



**Brian Maxted**

Brian Maxted sadly died on 6 August aged 88. He was

membership secretary of East Grinstead branch for six years from 2014, having joined the committee in 2009.

Brian's working life was as a mechanical engineer for physiotherapy equipment. He was an active man and enjoyed bowls and his garden. Brian always had a merry quip and a twinkle in his eyes. He welcomed members new and old, kept the register and the membership records in good order, and updated the noticeboard. He could always be relied on to help and organised fundraising raffles and tombolas.

**Mary Moore**

Bromley Branch reports with much sadness, the death of Mary Moore who died in February after a short illness. Obituary in our next issue.



**Lewisham member reads prayers at Nightingale service**

**Gladys Ekpo-Daniels, a former nurse and midwife and treasurer of Lewisham branch read prayers at a national online service to celebrate the service of nurses and other healthcare workers to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.**

The service was led by Bishop Sarah Mullally, the former chief nursing officer for England with the bible reading read by Chief Nursing Officer Ruth May.

In her sermon, the bishop spoke of the cost that has been paid by nurses and midwives in tackling coronavirus and the need

to support them now and in the long term. She said the nation is 'enormously grateful' for their work.

"This year is the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. It would have been filled with events to celebrate their contribution to health and society. Instead,

Covid-19 means that this year is filled with acts of compassion done by nurses and midwives, for which we are enormously grateful. If we are going to really celebrate nurses and midwives this year, we need to support them through the cost that they have paid, and to continue to support them when all

this is over." The service also featured contributions from nurses who spoke of their experience of working throughout the pandemic.

# Mirthy online talks prove popular

A series of online talks with live chat before and after with the speakers is proving very popular with Fellowship members across the three countries.

Over 550 members have registered for the talks which cover a wide range of topics which have included hypnosis, a Tibetan journey, Edith Cavell and stories from the clink.

To join the fortnightly talks visit: [www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF](http://www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF) and type in your name and email. You receive an email confirmation and a reminder email shortly before the talk is due to start. Both emails will include the same link which you click on at 10.45am on the day and wait for the event to start.

The opportunity to see the talks came about through Sally Bundock, Development Officer for the South East, who is a trustee of the Civil Service

Insurance Society Charity Fund. In developing the charity's links with NHS and social care charities she met Alex Ramamurthy, who at the time was the successful Chief Executive of the Care Workers Charity and has since founded Mirthy, who provide the talks. Alex has kindly agreed to continue these talks which are free to Fellowship and members at least to the end of the year.

"We have had some very positive comments" said Sally. "We have more members joining all the time." The talks are also promoted through the flourishing and well received South East News newsletter which Sally sends out fortnightly to all 61 branches in her region.

## Peter lifts the lid in new book



**Fellowship member Peter Sykes, has published another of his popular books of short stories with a medical connection which are sold in aid of local hospices.**

"All in a doctor's day" draws on his experience working as an NHS

surgeon in Manchester for 40 years, at the sharp end of medical practice. "The stories lift the lid on the good, the bad and the ugly" he said. "Some will make you laugh, a few will make you cry, and others have a surprising twist in the tail. A story a day could help members through Covid-19 restrictions."

Proceeds are shared between St Ann's Hospice in Stockport and East Cheshire Hospice in Macclesfield. Published by New Generation Publishing, the easiest way to get a copy is through Amazon. It is also available in Kindle. An audio version is planned for October.

Fellowship is published by the NHS Retirement Fellowship, Weymouth Community Hospital, 3 Melcombe Avenue, Weymouth, DT4 7TB. Telephone 01305 361317

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## Recruitment launch on hold

**The Fellowship was poised for a new start in 2020 after a year of consolidation which laid the ground work for a major recruitment initiative.**

The plan was halted by lockdown, but there are hopes that a fresh attempt can be made in 2021 when a recruitment leaflet will go out to 900,000 NHS retirees with the annual pension mailing.

During 2019 the Trustees completed an organisational review and redeveloped key governance features. A business plan was developed, grievance procedures introduced, equality and diversity policies reviewed, and risk management, health and safety, complaints and confidentiality policies agreed.

A planning for the future group led work on the re-branding exercise and endorsed the Heritage Lottery Found project. We have also worked closely with other related organisations like Age UK or the Cavell Nurses Trust.

National Council meetings were held in May and September, and a special one in February 2020 to make sure we were ready for the recruitment programme. "Regrettably, lockdown thwarted our best laid plans" said John Rostill, Chief Executive. "Our aspiration of substantially increasing membership will have to wait."

## Bournemouth find ways to celebrate

**Bournemouth and Christchurch branch celebrated its 40th anniversary in lockdown but wasn't able to celebrate as it had hoped with a party and a cream tea.**

They are hoping to have a belated celebration in the next few months. They have also had two socially distanced committee meetings in the garden of committee member Margaret Taylor and on the day of their anniversary each member had a glass of something special to toast the occasion remotely.

Copy for future editions should be sent to Lucia Hiden, Head of Communications NHS Retirement Fellowship Tel: 07739138954 Email: [northeastengland@nhsrf.org.uk](mailto:northeastengland@nhsrf.org.uk). Hard copy reports and pictures should be addressed to Lucia at central office (see new address left).