

New group fosters joint activities

A new group of over 30 branches inside, or just outside, the M25 has been launched by Sally Bundock, development officer for the south east. Its aim is to share activities and information about events and speakers.

Member branches can contact Sally to invite other branches to join one or more of their branch meetings or outings. Details are then e-mailed to all branch secretaries. Postal members in the area are also included.

“This initiative is likely to be of particular interest to new or smaller branches” said Sally. “Some larger branches are often tight for space and may not wish to invite others, but they can offer events from other branches to their own members who may like to take part in a wider range of Fellowship events. They may also have some useful information to circulate about speakers.”

In August the new Royal Marsden branch invited M25 Group members to their monthly meeting where the speaker gave an excellent presentation on the Bayeux Tapestry. Members from the Royal London, Chelsea and Westminster, Guy’s



Full of energy: Sally Bundock.

and St. Thomas, Haringey, Hampstead and Watford attended. A central London walk arranged by Watford Branch attracted members as did the Whittington branch’s two visits to the Walthamstow Wetlands. Watford Branch are planning a number of London based walks for 2019 to which group members will be invited.



“We hope the group will continue to offer members more opportunities to take part in Fellowship activities” said Sally. “Any branch close to the M25 can join and would be very welcome to make contact. Individual members can also ask for their e-mails to be added to the distribution list. Sally can be contacted at london.eastanglia@nhsrf.org.uk”

Chief Executive John Rostill commented: “*This is a really innovative idea. I’d like to encourage other branches to share fellowship in the same way.*”

Fellowship at the races



Twenty one members and friends of the Fellowship mostly from Cheltenham and Salisbury branches shared an outstanding day out at a world war one themed racing day at Cheltenham in November.

Among them were several members of Cheltenham branch who had never been to a race meeting before.

As well as the racing, the day included a re-creation of a field hospital, period artefacts and exhibits explaining how the war changed Gloucestershire. There was a parade of soldiers and an aerial combat display.

“The exhibitions and activities were outstanding” said John Rostill, Chief Executive who co-ordinated the trip through an agency offering discounted tickets. The weather was fine, I think some people won some money, and the first race was a ‘happy retirement’ hurdle, which amused us all.”

The 2018 keynote speech Passionate for patients



Rachel Power, Chief Executive of the Patients' Association shared her passion about patient care in a racing pace keynote speech that reminded delegates how much there is still to do in so many fields in a never ending quest for improvements.

The association, she explained, was there to gather information from patients to enable it to speak to government about patient priorities and concerns.

Using a variety of methods – for example a helpline which receives 4,000 calls a year, social media with 22,000 followers, focus groups, and the views of its own members – the association is able to say what's working and what's not, and to contribute to future developments like the NHS National Plan.

A new theme emerging is about how people can look after themselves better, and enhance their ability to improve their health. The association had taken part in recent meetings in Downing Street and argued that this was more than just an NHS issue and needed commitment on housing, welfare, education and public health as well.

More support in the community was needed, she said, to keep people better at home for

longer. "What we are hearing from our patients is that people want to be kept at home and in the locality as much as they can," she said.

Complaints still need to be handled more openly. "What people are saying is that when something has gone wrong the authorities should tell us and say sorry. But staff are nervous about saying they have got it wrong. There needs to be a learning culture."

Patients should be more involved in service design ("it's not rocket science") and services need to meet people's needs as individuals, looking beyond the diagnosis to see the person. And if that means buying a fishing licence to help them get out of the house, why not?

Rachel made the bold decision some years ago to make membership of the Patients Association free. "The aim is to have thousands of members and thousands of volunteers. We need grass roots engagement, we need to become passionate and to have a voice."

To contact the Patients Association go to patients-association.org.uk or call 020 8423 9111.

Grounds for optimism, says Ken

Life in the NHS is still tough for patients, carers and front line staff, the Fellowship's patron Ken Jarrold reminded members at the reception on the eve of the conference.

"Eight years of less than real terms levels of funding have left their mark" he said, but there were grounds for optimism in increased funding from next April and the government's decision to give the NHS highest priority.

"That's very welcome. The only down side is that local authorities on whom we depend have been decimated and many have seen budgets cut by 40%."

On another subject, Ken said he was pleased to see evidence of a change in management behaviour. Although there are still organisations that do not give priority to patients, carers and staff and there is still bullying and harassment, there is now new work on management practice that was the best he had seen for years, and a more compassionate style of leadership was gaining ground.

Ken has recently published a book "Other People's Shoes: 40 questions for leaders and managers" which distills his experience from 49 years in the NHS. Its key messages, he said, were that patients and carers come first, staff come second, and bullying and harassment have no place in successful leadership.

"There is some evidence of a return to the values and behaviour in which we, as a Fellowship, believe," he concluded.

"Other People's Shoes" is out in paperback for £7.99 from book shops.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

A wonderful year: now we must build for the future

"This has been a wonderful year" said Chief Executive John Rostill as he welcomed delegates from 50 branches to the conference.

"We have had lots of exposure to health trusts and health organisations. But we can not rest on our laurels. The NHS nationally now know that we exist. In some parts of the country the NHS locally know we exist. The Trustees are fully aware of the need to capitalise and take advantage of the situation."

A small committee has been set up to plan for growth. "I am hopeful that the outcome of that review will be growth and development and a new communications strategy" he said.

Call for action

Meanwhile, he encouraged members to act themselves – for example by becoming members of foundation trusts, or better still to seek election as a governor.

"It is also appropriate for us to write to local health services and ask what we can do to help. There is a big drive to increase the number of volunteers – we might be able to help there" he said. Contact



with hospital leagues of friends would be another approach (see below).

"I also want us to prepare for more events next year, run by the NHS nationally. It is likely that July 5 will eventually become NHS day, when trusts and hospitals and GP practices will be

encouraged to do something. My ambition is that when anything major happens in the NHS, the Fellowship is part of it."

Branches could also consider inviting the chairman or Chief Executive of their local trust to become branch president or patron. "They will regard it as an honour."

Supportive trusts

Where a hospital or trust is particularly supportive and given help beyond what might normally be expected they could be put forward for the Fellowship's award scheme.

At the same time members will continue to show the friendship and fun that is part of our organisation. "I was really impressed with last evening" he said. "Normally that sort of togetherness takes until Saturday."

Responding to questions John reminded members that branches do have the freedom to invite non NHS people to join, where it is appropriate. "Anybody you want to ask to join your branch will be eligible. Don't create artificial barriers."

John survives "assault"

The Fellowship's Chief Executive John Rostill had been selected from the audience on Thursday evening by singer Michelle Montouri to be the subject of a provocative song during which she had sat on his lap and offered a warm embrace.

Next morning, as he addressed conference, John opened his speech by recalling the incident. "I was individually and physically assaulted by a lady in half a red dress" he lamented, which prompted undisguised mirth and no sympathy from members.

"If you think I was embarrassed you don't know me well enough. When I was a lot younger I was put in a similar position in a rugby club. The only good thing that came out of it was that she called me petite." As a warm up for his more serious report, it could not have been bettered.

Links with the leagues

Chief Executive, John Rostill and vice president Vic Griffiths met the Chief Executive of Attend (formerly known as the Association of Hospital Leagues of Friends) earlier in 2018. They agreed that there was advantage to both organisations if we worked more closely together.

John said: "There are 530 League of Friends groups with an active volunteer force of over 30,000. Clearly there are mutual advantages. We might recruit more members (health service volunteers are eligible to join) and leagues of friends might benefit by encouraging even more of our members to join their volunteers. Please contact myself or Vic if you would like to know more."

Finances "in a good place"

The Fellowship is in a very good financial position with a set of figures to die for when compared with those of an NHS Trust, the treasurer Paul Farenden reported to conference.

The strong balance sheet enabled him to say that in the short to medium term, the Fellowship is in a good place. In the longer term it was important that the strategy to increase membership was pursued, particularly because of the fragility there now is about a grant from NHS England. "We are still hopeful, but there is some uncertainty – it is important to keep membership numbers up."

A grant from the Civil Service Insurance Society to help with recruitment among the social care retirees is to be used in Scotland, where health and social care is more closely integrated. In England, former social care staff were reluctant to join an organisation which was branded NHS.

Cardiff top newsletter contest

Cardiff branch were the winners of the 2018 newsletter competition with a newsletter which the judges described as having lots of “pick me up and read me” appeal. It’s the first time a branch outside England has won the award.

Reporting to conference on behalf of fellow judges Grace Clarke (chairman of the Scottish Federation) and Liz Malin (chair of Blanford Forum branch) Andrew Moss, editor of the Fellowship national newsletter said they liked the concise, inviting style of the Cardiff newsletter which gave a bright reflection of a busy branch.

Runner up was Cambridge branch, with a comprehensive, high quality newsletter and Highly Commended was Northampton’s publication full of useful content, clearly presented.



Margaret Moffat, Fellowship chairman, presents the shield and certificate to John Toman, Welsh development officer, who received it on behalf of Cardiff branch, watched by Andrew Moss, newsletter editor.

Leadership sparks anniversary events

Individual leadership backed up by membership participation was the theme that lay behind presentations on some of the activities that branches took part in to mark the anniversaries.



Irma Stuart-Tei reports on Crawley events

First someone had the idea: then someone had to do it. Delegates listened attentively as Peter Sheppard, from Brighton, related the story of the creation of the “timeline” exhibition which has since been used in other parts of the country. Christine Harper, from Suffolk West told how members worked with the hospital trust to tie in with its activities, and used the exhibition to link with individual memories from members about their time in the NHS.

In Walsall the event was held in atrocious weather but nonetheless attracted a lot of interest with speakers including a paediatrician Dr Kartik Ray who came to the UK in the 1970s, and a midwife who did a re-enactment of childbirth in the 1940s.

Crawley and district are celebrating for the whole year, Irma Stuart-Tei reported. Events so far had included a picnic in the park and a month long exhibition in the local museum.

UNSUNG HERO

Smiling Ratna wins award



Smiling Ratna serves tea at SW Surrey

Selvamalar Ratnasingam from South West Surrey branch has been awarded the Fellowship’s “Unsung Hero” award, which recognizes members who contribute in a quiet way to the well being of their branch.

Nominating her for the award, Diane Grainger, secretary of the branch said: “She is known to us as Ratna and has taken on one of the most important parts of our monthly meetings by volunteering to make the tea and coffee for everyone. She washes up every time and provides the tea, coffee, milk, sugar and lovely biscuits out of her own pocket.

“Before Ratna took on this role it was increasingly difficult to find volunteers for the ‘tea rota’ and, more than once, the membership was threatened with ‘no volunteers – no tea!’. However, Ratna has saved the day with her willingness to help, is completely reliable and, importantly, always has such a lovely smile.

In her quiet way, Ratna is definitely our very own ‘Unsung Hero’. We are extremely grateful for all she does.”

500 join travel insurance scheme

More than 500 members of the Fellowship have taken advantage of the NHS worldwide annual travel insurance, the scheme’s promoter Grant Whiskin told conference.

But there has been a change in the terms. Where previously members under 80 could sign up and

be able to continue insurance after 80, the age limit for joining has now been reduced to under 75.

“We need to sustain the scheme for the members who joined when we launched it” said Grant. “It is done with regret, but if you join before 75 now there is no upper age limit.”

Conference 2019

Next year’s annual meeting and conference will be in Coventry on Friday 1 November, subject to satisfactory arrangements.

Questions and answers



The Question Time panel: John Rostill, Ros Lobo, Ken Jarrold, Margaret Moffat and David Paterson.

Useful information was shared during the course of a valuable question time style discussion ably chaired by the Fellowship's patron Ken Jarrold.

Among the points discussed were:

GDPR

Training and advice about how branches should deal with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) is likely to be offered to members. Chief Executive John Rostill said the Fellowship nationally had complied with the regulations but training would be offered once it was known in a few months' time what people need to know from a branch point of view. "It all came in with a huge flurry" he said, "it was never intended to stop us doing what we want to do."

NHS discounts

An approach has been made to the scheme to see whether Fellowship membership cards can be used as a way to access the scheme instead of online only.

Capitation

Flexibility could be applied to members joining part way through a year so that they do not have to pay the full capitation for less than a full year.

Motions to conference

Planning the agenda for next year's conference will consider whether to re-introduce motions put forward for debate by branches, despite little success from expressing views to government departments in the past. If they do come back, motions would need to be submitted early so that they could be on the agenda.

Postal members

The Fellowship's 600 postal members will continue to be offered the chance to take part in meetings to share information and exchange ideas.

Membership numbers

More detailed information is to be made available on the effect on numbers from the vote to increase capitation. In some parts of the country (for example the north east) many branches had closed. In others membership has held up well.

Reasons for branch closures have included branches finding it difficult to recruit new blood, difficulties in finding people to take on officer roles, and branches not feeling the need for an umbrella organisation.

Panel members commented that there was a need for training to help officers, but that recruitment, especially of younger retirees, remained difficult.

Name change

There was no support from the audience for a change of name for the Fellowship. Nobody has complained about it and we don't need to change, was the general view. Chairman Margaret Moffat said it needed careful thought and should involve the whole membership before anything was done. John Rostill agreed. "Nobody has made a decision" he said. "I asked branches for views and I got two responses. There needs to be a serious debate. People in the NHS have never heard of us. Our need to re-launch is crucial. Whether there needs to be a name change is another matter."

Pat and David enjoy first conference



Postal members Pat and David Hopkins enjoyed their first experience of a Fellowship conference.

“We did not know what to expect” said Pat, a retired GP from Buxton. “We were pleasantly surprised as we did not know anybody. We found everyone very friendly and we enjoyed it. We never felt out of it.”

Fred.Olsen continues discount offers

Fellowship members and others travelling with them can still receive a 10% saving on Fred.Olsen cruises, Keith Norman, Affinity Sales Manager with the company told delegates.

The 10% offered in the recent promotion drops to 5% for people returning a second time – but with a 5% loyalty bonus added the result is the same.

The family run business which once brought cargoes of fruit and vegetables from the Canary Isles to London and gave the name to Canary Wharf has won awards for group travel and has attracted Fellowship members on several voyages.



Single occupancy remains “a hard thing” to manage, Keith conceded, and advised members to look out for deals and special offers, and suggested groups should seek “extras” when they book. As long as they are on the same booking, friends and family travelling with an NHSRF member can gain the same discount. The company is also reducing the use of plastic on its ships.

JOINING THE TEAM

Karen excited by Fellowship job

Karen Kennedy, the Fellowship’s new development officer for the north west brings with her a passion for helping older people and a track record of delivering services they value.

For 18 years she worked with Manchester Care and Repair, setting up a home from hospital service which supported older people through the process of discharge and safe return home.

At present she works part time as activities co-ordinator with the Royal Voluntary Service, helping people over 55 to be more active and to do something they have not tried before.

“I am really passionate about long term health conditions” she said. “People are living longer and it’s important we reach them with help and health messages. It was really exciting when the Fellowship job came up – it fits in really well with what I want to do.”

Karen is also a yoga teacher, using her skills in care homes and dementia care homes and she has recently qualified to support people with long

term health conditions sometimes caused by diet and stress, trying to bring the world of meditation and mindfulness to help them.

She has a son who is at university, and she lives in Whitefield, near Bury in Greater Manchester.



Paul finds energy in the south west



Paul Pople, the new development officer for south west England has been pleased to find busy and energetic branches in some “getting to know you” visits to parts of his vast region.

Paul was a Major in the Royal Signals serving in Germany, Belize, the Middle East and Northern

Ireland before retiring to Dorset. He has worked as a project manager for RACAL Instruments and the NHS.

He gained further insight into the NHS through his son Bertie who has Wolf Hirshhorn Syndrome and was fortunate enough to receive excellent NHS care at Great Ormond St, Winchester, Southampton, Dorchester, Bristol and Taunton. Paul also has three daughters who he is glad have not needed to see nearly so much of the NHS. They have all left home now.

“So far I have spent time going round to see existing branches and see how I could help before thinking about how to rescue branches that have gone, or starting new ones. I have been pleasantly surprised. The branches I have visited have been very busy and very energetic.”

Paul enjoys most country pursuits including working his dogs, Beano and Ted, fishing, wild swimming and gardening. He has recently been singing in a number of choirs and has been performing speeches from 1910 as part of the Killerton House exhibition marking the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage.

STEPPING DOWN

Two much valued members of the Fellowship team are to retire this year.

Anthea Zell, who has been with the Fellowship as development officer and then operations co-ordinator for 18 years and John Toman, development officer for Wales for 16 years will step down at the end of March.

“Fellowship” recalls their contribution to our success.

Anthea

Anthea started as development officer for the south of England, then moved to Yorkshire and was development officer for the north where she met Hans, a Swiss publisher. They were married in 2014 and now live in north west Scotland. “I was brought up in Scotland so I feel in a way it is a return home” she said. “We have settled here and I have joined a local branch and I’m now branch secretary.

“I was really only going to do the job for a couple of years” she said, “but you find you meet a lot of people and you are making friendships across the UK and you are working with colleagues that it is a pleasure to work with and you think ‘why give up?’ It’s as simple as that. I have enjoyed the work and I have enjoyed meeting members, working with regional representatives and the staff.”

“I can see the value in the Fellowship for people of all ages, particularly people who might feel isolated. I am still optimistic for the future. We still need to support the smaller branches with an



older membership and provide younger members with a more active programme. The two can exist happily together.

“I have been very fortunate to work with Sherry and the central office staff and with John as Chief Executive. They have given me friendship and support that I have really appreciated.”

Chief Executive John Rostill said: Anthea has been part of the Fellowship for nearly 20 years. She seems to have had a hand in everything. She will be particularly missed for the sterling work she undertakes in recording accurately the diverse discussions at national meetings. Her attention to detail and turnaround speed is legendary.”

John

John has led the way in changing the fortunes of the Fellowship in Wales. When he took up the job there were three branches in Wales. Until recently there were 14, although two have closed recently after subscriptions increased.

“I have enjoyed it” he said. “It’s been one of those labours of love. I like being part of the camaraderie and the friendship – I have always enjoyed contact with the branches and they seem to appreciate being able to get in touch.”

Before joining the Fellowship at the invitation of former NHSRF director Roger Stokoe, John held senior nursing, general management and chief executive posts in the NHS in England and Wales. His last post before retirement was as senior health official heading up the trust unit in the Welsh government, experience which helped him to develop good contact between the Fellowship and

the Welsh government and senior NHS managers, whose support has been invaluable.

Among the innovative ideas on which John has led the way have been the popular golf tournament, which each year attracts new members, and the Fellowship awards to NHS organisations which give special support to their local branch, which have often been presented to the winners by a Welsh government minister.

He will not be lost to the Fellowship entirely, however. “I shall continue to run the golf tournament and to help to raise sponsorship and promote the Fellowship in any way I can” he said.

Chief Executive John Rostill said: “John has been a real stalwart for nearly two decades. His contribution, particularly to the development of the Fellowship in Wales, has been immense.”



Cancer charity Fellowship for cheery Enid

Moorlands branch are very proud of their member Enid Ball who has received an honorary fellowship in the Cancer Research UK “Flame of Hope” awards for her outstanding fund raising.

Since 1978 Enid has worked with the committee in the village of Cheddleton in Staffordshire helping to raise around £60,000 each year.

The citation reads: “Her smile, humour and desire to raise more money means she is a much loved and incredibly valued member of the committee and is a great advocate for Cancer Research UK. She works non stop in support of the charity and her cheery persona makes her a pleasure to be around.”



Della Holidays pair retire

Roger and Robbie Bristow, the husband and wife team from Della Holidays, who have run successful holidays for Fellowship members for many years, have decided to retire.

“We have greatly enjoyed the experience of taking members to various holiday destinations” said Roger. “Many of them we now count as our valued friends and we shall keep in touch. We know from many positive comments that members have appreciated our services and in some cases have ventured on holiday alone for the first time. We feel honoured to have been instrumental in giving them the confidence to do so.

“We shall greatly miss Fellowship holidays but feel now is the time to end a very enjoyable and rewarding experience.”

South Tees

South Tees members on their way to visit a Lavender Farm in June.



Blackpool knitters save lives

Members of Blackpool and Fylde branch have knitted 1,000 items of baby clothing which have been shipped to Uganda where they will save lives in weather which can be humid and cold as well as hot.



Branch member Kathy Scanlon has been travelling to Uganda to train children’s nurses for over 10 years and has told members of the distressing situation of children dressed in rags and old sacks. Uganda still has one of the highest infant and child mortality rates in the world and for the youngest, hypothermia is one of the most common causes of death.

Fellowship members decided to help by knitting and as a result 1,000 items, lovingly made and kindly donated went out to Africa.

Happy cruisers enjoy Seine trip



Happy cruisers wave to the camera at Honfleur. One of the best things about the trip was the friendship established between members of two very different branches.

Fourteen Fellowship members – eight from Wolverhampton and six from Oxford – greatly enjoyed each other’s company on a cruise up the river Seine to Rouen in November.

The five day trip from Southampton with Fred. Olsen cruises was blessed with mostly fine weather which allowed members to explore Rouen and Honfleur at leisure as well as enjoy

the cruise experience on the Braemar, one of the smaller ships in the fleet.

“I really enjoyed it” said first time cruiser Rita Wynter from Wolverhampton branch. “I have never been on a cruise before. Everyone was very friendly and helpful and the amenities have been really good.”

Popular poppy visit



East Herts branch enjoyed a visit to the Poppy Factory at Richmond, followed by a boat trip on the River Thames.

“We had a very good day, we were very impressed by the ethos of the factory. For anyone who has not visited the factory we thoroughly recommend it,” said branch treasurer Marion Cleveland

Recruitment success



Carmen (right) with friends at the conference.

Regional Representative Ros Logo and Carmen Brooks-Johnson a member of St George’s, Merton & Wandsworth branch had an immediate success when they promoted the Fellowship at a conference organized for the fortieth anniversary of the Nurses Association of Jamaica.

“We had good interest and enquiries and one lady from Northampton signed up on the spot and paid in cash” said Ros.

Intrepid Brighton

Intrepid members of Brighton & Hove City Branch braved the rain to share lunch at the Devil’s Dyke hotel on the South Downs Way.



Wolverhampton celebrate with retired workers



Wolverhampton Health Workers Fellowship held a celebration event in honour of local retired workers.

Retirees of the Trust enjoyed a buffet lunch, opportunity to meet others and talks from key Trust figures. The Fellowship are inviting any new members to join them and take advantage of all the Fellowship has to offer including social

events, leisure activities, inspirational speakers, educational events and weekend breaks.

Jeremy Vanes, chairman of the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (left) joined Sue Williams (regional representative) Dorothy Macdonald, a founder member of the branch and John Rostill, Chief Executive of the Fellowship at the event.

Water and music



Cosham branch had a very successful trip to London for guided tours of both the Water and Musical museums.

The tours were headed by two volunteers, one aged 82 the other 88 who had great enthusiasm and knowledge of their subjects and made the information come alive and entertained us, along with tunes played on a large Wurlitzer and many older instruments. A visit to recommend to all, writes Mary Sheppard.

East Grinstead celebrate 20 years

Sixty members and guests shared an afternoon tea at a hotel overlooking Lingfield Park racecourse in August to celebrate the 20th anniversary of East Grinstead branch.

Regional Representative, Ros Lobo and Beryl Hobson, chair of the Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Trust were guests, both of whom congratulated the branch on their achievements over the past 20 years, and wished members well for the future.

Former chairperson and long standing member Yvonne Kennard gave a short talk on her time within the NHS and at East Grinstead



Celebrating: today’s committee

Anniversary celebrations

All over the UK branches have marked the anniversaries of the NHS and the Fellowship with special events. Here are some of them:

Greenwich

Greenwich Meridian branch held a cream tea party with a Frank Sinatra sing-a-like and a beautifully iced 70/40 cake. The afternoon was much enjoyed - many members getting up to dance.



Peterborough

A total of 48 members, family and guests from Peterborough branch attended an afternoon tea to celebrate the two anniversaries. Rob Hughes made a speech and led the singing of "happy birthday."



Aberdeen

Aberdeen's celebrations took place in October - with an outstanding cake.



New Forest

Members of the New Forest branch hosted a tea party at Milford War Memorial Hospital to mark the NHS anniversary and shared memories of their careers. Among them was retired nurse Evelyn Lamb who spoke of changes in the service and former GP Dr David Badham who reminded members that they could look back on their careers and know they brought something of value.

Basildon and Thurrock

Basildon and Thurrock branch got together with Basildon University Hospital League of Friends in September to celebrate three special anniversaries.

As well as the seventieth anniversary of the NHS this year, the League of Friends was celebrating 50 years of fund raising and the Fellowship branch 40 years of the NHSRF.

A special afternoon tea was held for members to enjoy a triple celebration. Vic Griffiths, branch chairman said: "There's a commonality between our groups and it was lovely to get everyone together to celebrate three significant milestones."

Ceredigion

Ceredigion branch celebrated 70 years of the NHS with an afternoon tea at Glandyfi Castle, near Machynlleth when their guests were Dr Alan and Mrs Karen Axford. Dr Axford was a consultant physician at Bronglais General Hospital, Aberystwyth for many years and spoke inspiringly of his experience of the NHS.



Gloucester



Gloucester branch celebrated the anniversaries with tea and bunting provided by the members. The picture was taken by their speaker, who gave an amusing talk about his time in retailing. "We are now a very small group, but we stay loyal" said chairman and secretary Christine Harwood.

Cheltenham

Cheltenham celebrated the 40th anniversary of the branch in October by holding a tea party for members. Pictured are Di Furbear (chairman), cutting the celebratory cake with Dame Janet Trotter (Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire), committee members with NHSRF Chief Executive John Rostill and chairman Margaret Moffat.



Lewisham

Lewisham members gather round their special cake. Tea and cake was shared with visitors and staff at Lewisham Hospital.



Bradford

Members enjoyed an afternoon tea, celebrating the joint anniversaries of the NHS and the Fellowship.



OBITUARIES

Phyllis Derbyshire

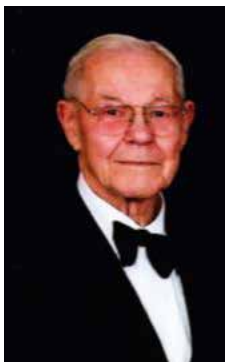
Chorley & South Ribble branch members are very sad to report the death of Phyllis Derbyshire. Phyllis worked for many years as medical records officer at Chorley Hospital. You could always count on her to find missing case notes!

Following her retirement she joined the Chorley branch and became joint treasurer in 2004. Unfortunately she suffered from ill health for the past five years, but she attended the meetings whenever she felt strong enough. Her courage is an example to us all.

John Smoothy

John Smoothy, one of the long standing members of Huntingdon branch died in September aged 86. He joined the Fellowship with his wife Veronica, former head of midwifery services at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, and from the start he threw himself wholeheartedly into its activities.

He joined the committee, organized holidays and trips out for many years, printed programmes, badges and newsletters – even delivering them to all members on his motorbike. In fact, as in all things, he gave 100 per cent commitment.



His life was one of service to the end. His career was in the RAF, he was a member of the British Legion, a keen member of the local choral society, the mace bearer for the local council (a job he cherished) and he did many acts of kindness to fellow townspeople and neighbours.

In recognition of all this work, he is to be made, posthumously, a Freeman of St Ives, an honour of which his family will be proud. He was described as being a “one off.” One particular attribute was his ability to have a “parade ground” voice when needed – useful when the PA system was broken. John and his input to the branch will be greatly missed.

Eileen King

Bromley branch report, with much sadness, the death, at 90, of Eileen King. She was working for the West Kent Joint Hospital Board in 1946 before



the NHS, rising to become an Assistant Administrator at the Lennard and then Orpington hospitals. She retired in 1988 and joined the NHSRF. Eileen was branch treasurer for 16 years and was an active and valued committee member until her death in July, after a short illness.

Carmen Steele

Haringey branch members are very sad to report their former secretary Carmen Steele died in August aged 69. Carmen joined the Fellowship when she retired as a health visitor. Due to her enthusiasm and interest she was appointed secretary about two years after joining and continued in the role until illness forced her to resign. She worked tirelessly arranging speakers, outings and other activities. She was a kind and gentle soul who never hesitated to help anyone in need. She made regular visits to sick or housebound family friends and past members of the group.

Once a week she spent an afternoon at a local school assisting children with their reading. Her kindness and generosity knew no bounds. She was always ‘on the go’. Carmen will be missed by all for her generous spirit and outgoing nature.

Brian Saunders

Croydon Branch report with much sadness the death of their retired chairman, Brian Saunders, in October, aged 83.

Brian was instrumental in reforming the Croydon Branch over 14 years ago after it had gone into decline. He had a long career in the NHS and was district Catering Manager at Mayday Hospital, before going into Facilities Management at the same hospital.



During his career he was National Secretary and then Chairman of the Hospital Catering Association.

Mainly due to his enthusiasm for the Fellowship and his ‘larger than life personality’, Croydon now has a thriving branch with over 120 members. He leaves a wife, Joan, three sons and four grandchildren. Members of the Fellowship attended his funeral in November.

David Pink

David Pink was a former treasurer and then membership secretary of Cosham branch. He grew up in Petersfield, Hampshire and joined the Junior Red Cross Society at Petersfield, and eventually became Cadet Officer and ran the boy cadets. After he passed his driving test he drove the Red Cross ambulance.



He held a variety of jobs, but left work in 1966 to care for his sick wife, who died in 1999. After his wife’s death he became a clerical officer at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth, where he remained until he retired.

After retirement David became very active in the Waterlooville and District Residents Association and took on every post including editor of the magazine, chairperson and finally president. He also volunteered at the Fellowship where he became treasurer and then membership secretary.

Rosamond Pratt

Bristol Central branch is very sad to announce the death of Ros Pratt at the age of 95. A founder member of the branch she attended the meeting in 1979 when it was agreed to start a branch. She became treasurer in 1980 and continued in the role for 26 years, after which the branch recognised her service and she became the first president.



She continued to play an active part to the end, organizing the bring and buy sale last August and attending the summer lunch a week later. Two weeks later she had a stroke and died five days later.

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP



Mike Turner from Liverpool branch was the winner of the photography competition on the theme 'Seen Better Days' with his dramatic picture "I used to lift rocks, now I'm the weakest link"

Runners up were Jill Evans and Maureen Salmon, both from the Cardiff branch. Congratulations to all three members for their excellent pictures and imaginative interpretation of the theme. The winning entries and many other quality entries can be seen on the Photography Group facebook site.

The next competition, with a closing date of 29 March 2019 is on the theme of "In the city." Buildings, people, history, traffic, markets, entertainment - so much to see and photograph. The prizes for both competitions are £100 for the winner and two £50 runner-up prizes, thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Civil Service Insurance Society (www.csis.co.uk)



Next time's theme: "In the city"

Further details and entry forms are on the website (www.nhsrf.org.uk) or contact Photography Group Coordinator, Anthea Zell
Email: photography@nhsrf.org.uk
Tel: 01520 722951

New book could help members

A 1,000 page book full of valuable information for many NHSRF members has been published.

Its author, Marion Shoard writes: "Few of us reach our 70s without having to make decisions arising from age and infirmity, whether our own or that of a partner or relative.

"How can you prevent your attorneys from walking off with your money? What rights do you have to choose your NHS treatment? One in 10 people over 65 are malnourished: what food and drink do you need in later life? Is equity release a good idea? What are the pitfalls of retirement housing? How can you make the most of a social care system which in theory empowers all older people to secure good care, yet has been subject to swingeing cuts?

"I have been trying to answer these and many other key questions for nearly 20 years after my mother developed dementia and lost her sight. My book, *How to Handle Later Life* – is packed with case studies and advice based on research. Staff nurse Liz Charalambous, who reviewed it for the *Nursing Times*, said, "It is extremely well written, informative, well thought through, and the writing style makes it easily accessible to a wide range of readers. ... Everyone should read this book either to benefit ourselves as we age, or to help those around us."

"How to handle later life" is available from Amaranth books for £22.99. For more information go to www.amaranthbooks.co.uk; and click on 'our titles'.

Welsh conference inspires

Eighty delegates from seven branches attended the national conference in Llandrindod Wells which concluded special anniversary events in Wales.

The conference opened with an inspiring and at times emotional presentation by the Fellowship's patron, Ken Jarrold, which reviewed the changes in the NHS since 1948 from a patient, not management perspective. Among major innovations he listed penicillin, the closure of mental hospitals and the introduction of day surgery.

He was followed by Dr Cynthia Matthews, former chairman of the Fellowship, with her review of changes, and later a session which was both profound and hilarious with Ethel Armstrong (NHSRF patron) and special guest Aneira Thomas, the first baby born in the NHS in 1948 in which they talked to John Rostill about their reminiscences and reflections of working in the NHS.

NHSRF chairman Margaret Moffat set out the challenges facing the Fellowship if it is to grow and prosper, and keynote speaker Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services at the Welsh Government spoke of "Healthier Wales" and set out plans for a 10 year engagement with citizens and staff to achieve it – including working with organisations like the Fellowship.

Keeping up with the NHS future

Fellowship members have the chance to learn more about long term plans for the NHS by keeping in touch through regular updates from the NHS long term plan engagement team on england.ltp@nhs.net.

In June, when the government announced a funding plan for the NHS for the next five years, it also asked the NHS to come up with a plan for how to spend it.

Key areas being worked on include life course programmes (looking at prevention, healthy childhood and personal care for people with long term conditions and older people with frailty); clinical priorities (cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory, learning disability and mental health); and enabling things to happen (workforce, training, leadership, technology, research, primary care and engagement with the expertise of staff, patients and public).

George Kempton, the Fellowship's vice chairman is our representative through Age UK on the NHS England Sounding Board. "I am sure many of our members would be interested in updates on the plans so far" he said.

The long term plan was due to be published in December 2018 and will provide the basis for local health and care organisations to develop detailed plans for the coming year by next April and this period offers an opportunity to help shape services in each area. To keep a track on progress go to england.ltp@nhs.net.