

Richly deserved honour for Ethel

Ethel Armstrong, the Fellowship's much loved life patron and constant source of encouragement and enthusiasm, was awarded the MBE in the New Year Honours for services to the NHS workforce and retired people.

Renowned for her passion for the NHS and the Fellowship, Ethel has been an inspiration to branches across the country and has travelled thousands of miles to offer her unique brand of cheerful enthusiasm which often restored the confidence and determination of members facing difficult challenges.

"I feel very privileged and I am delighted to accept it on behalf of the Fellowship and retired staff in all disciplines" she said. "But it's not about me, it's about being able to open doors and get respect and recognition for the Fellowship. I shall continue as long as I am able, and I'll always be a member. Communicating with people is what it's all about and treating everyone with courtesy and respect."

Ethel had already started work when the NHS began in 1948 and worked in various parts of the country, mainly in radiography and radiotherapy, until she retired as tutor/adviser to the breast screening service in Liverpool in 1989.

She joined the Durham branch immediately and became chairman in 1994, a position she still holds. She was regional representative for the north east, then national vice chairman in 2009, chairman in 2011 and president in 2013. Her active involvement for so long was recognised in 2015

when she became life patron "the only one from the shop floor" as she is keen to remind us.

Margaret Moffat, the Fellowship's chairman said: "Many, many congratulations to our patron and tireless ambassador for the Fellowship. Well done Ethel."



Telling it with passion: Ethel Armstrong explains the value of the Fellowship to Simon Stevens, NHS Chief Executive (right) and Sir Bruce Keogh, former Medical Director.

Chief Executive John Rostill said: "Ethel has worked tirelessly for our members. She has set an example that will be difficult to replicate. I can't think of anyone more suitable to be honoured at the start of our fortieth year."

Ethel goes ballistic

Life went "ballistic" for our Patron Ethel Armstrong after she appeared on a radio programme about the 70th anniversary of the NHS.



Ethel Armstrong at conference: the passion remains

"What they saw was passion, enthusiasm and total commitment" she said. "It went ballistic from then."

Ethel had met top people in the NHS and told them about the benefits of the Fellowship. She was asked if she'd be prepared to do more radio and TV. "I told them if I could promote the NHS Retirement Fellowship I'd stand on my head" she said.

Looking back over her 70 year NHS journey which began as a "gofer" in a mental hospital before a career in radio diagnostics and led on to the Fellowship and the warm welcome that hooked her into membership, she reflected: "It's been a long road but I have got here. And the passion remains. It's what floats my boat. I don't think my feet are going to touch the ground next year."

New chairman takes over

Margaret Moffat, is the new chairman of the Fellowship taking over from Audrey Harris who has been such an active promoter of the organisation for the past two years.

Margaret is a member of Cambridge branch and was previously regional representative for East Anglia. Her first job in the NHS was as a Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer. After a long break to bring up her family she returned as a ward clerk and later was bed manager for Addenbrooke's Hospital.

Accepting her new role she thanked members for placing their trust in her and said she hoped to achieve at least some of the things they wanted. "I've got big shoes to follow," she said. "I don't think Audrey realised what choppy waters we were going to go through and she has done a magnificent job."

Audrey was unable to attend the conference because her husband Martyn had been admitted to hospital only days before.



New chairman Margaret Moffat (left) with former chairman Cynthia Matthews who handed on the badge of office.

The Chief Executive's report: an exciting future

John Rostill predicted an exciting future for the Fellowship in 2018 in his review of the year which looked back over 2017 and forward to 2018.

Looking back

John gave a quick run through of actions taken or in progress during the year:

Fund raising: Bob Middleton had been appointed to help the Fellowship bid for grants.



John Rostill: "It's a make or break year."

Already under way are

Talks with the NHS communications team which plans to celebrate staff of every era of the 70 years, marking milestones in its history and reminding the public of the role they can play in its future.

Services in Westminster Abbey and York Minster, to which we expect some Fellowship members to be invited

Locally Trusts will be asked to organise their own celebrations which gave a chance for the Fellowship to be involved. One branch – Brighton – had already created an exhibition of 1,000 years of health care.

Photographs and Memories: Fellowship members could put more in the public domain



Unfortunately none of the bids had been successful – but there were more in the pipeline.

Publicity: The appeal to branches to share successful publicity material had been disappointing. There had not been a huge amount sent in to central office. The deadline has been extended to 10 February 2018.

Website: continued development in hand, but one company which was thought to meet our needs had been unable to match important requirements. A new specification is being developed.

Garden parties: no dates have been fixed yet, so we can't announce the process for choosing the 20 members to be given a place in 2018. They are usually in May and June.

Engagement with NHS Trusts: This was proving difficult. There are 152 Foundation Trusts each of which has a duty to engage with local people. "I can't understand why every member of the Fellowship doesn't become a Trust member or even stand for being a governor" said John. "It would be a very useful way of continuing to influence the NHS."

And looking forward

"Am I excited about next year?" asked John. "Of course I am. Why? Because first of all it is our 40th anniversary. And also it is the 70th of the NHS. I can tell you that the NHS at all its levels will be looking to the NHSRF to help with the celebrations. Our strategy is to raise our profile and increase members. It's make or break next year. Let's make sure we make it."

and share stories. Some were already being shared with the NHS communications team.

Writing letters: John will be writing to Chief Executives to suggest Fellowship involvement. Branches can make their own approaches.

Health heroes: A project called "health heroes" is being launched in January when people will be nominated by MPs. We should write to MPs with our suggestions.

Points of Light: the Prime Minister's office will be identifying people who have given service above and beyond for special recognition. We need to make sure we have some people involved.

“We have so much to offer” says new vice chairman

George Kempton, a member of North Devon branch and regional representative for the South West, is the new vice chairman following a rapid rise through the ranks.

His NHS career took in a huge variety of jobs, starting as a Medical Scientific Officer before managing the NHS management training scheme, then helping to develop occupational standards and NVQs in health care, co-directing a government initiative called “Patients First” and later taking on various consultancy roles on both NHS and World Health Organisation projects.

He joined the Fellowship seven years ago and was regional representative within a year and is now vice chairman. “I am very much looking forward to it” he said. “The Fellowship has so much to offer, there is so much we can do to help it grow. Being a member has opened other doors and as a result I am now active with Age UK and other UK organisations.”

He lives near Barnstaple with his wife Margaret. They have two sons and four grandchildren. He has been actively involved with Rotary for 30 years and volunteers with other local charities.



“Stronger after a turbulent year” says treasurer

A turbulent and challenging year has ended with the Fellowship in a stronger position and financially sound for the future, the Hon Treasurer Paul Farenden reported to the AGM.

But he warned that progress can only be achieved if membership stays stable, or increases from its present level.

“We have had a very turbulent and challenging period over the last 12 months because of the withdrawal of grants and the ballot on subscriptions – you know that better than I do” he said.



Am I Ringo? Asks Margaret

Looking along the top table at the conference, new chairman Margaret Moffat found herself sitting next to Paul (Farenden) George (Kempton) and John (Rostill).

“Does that make me Ringo?” she asked. “I can assure you that I will be banging the drum for the Fellowship for the next two years.”



Top group: George, Margaret (Ringo), John and Paul.

“The Fellowship has come through that in some respects in a stronger position. The ballot result and the increased subscription makes us financially viable. I have confidence in that if we retain membership at about 10,000.

“It is important that we grasp that financial certainty and make the most of the resources we have and take the opportunity to grow the Fellowship and meet our strategic objectives.

“We have a good team of trustees who are well placed to contribute to that endeavour. We also have the opportunity to use our experience and knowledge to add value to the NHS.”

Don't be shy - ask for help

Struggling smaller branches facing financial or other difficulties should seek help by contacting development officers and/or regional representatives, Chief Executive John Rostill explained in response to a question on the financial report.

“It's a question that has been put to me before, and it is something we shall be paying attention to” he said. “We shall do what we can to help.”

Team work the key to NHS future

The importance of being part of a team and the need to make the NHS a welcoming and popular choice of career were among the values stressed by Danny Mortimer, Chief Executive of NHS Employers in a wide-ranging talk which revealed his passion for the service and its staff.



In a 30 minute tour of the issues facing NHS employers today he began by remembering his own tentative first steps in the NHS and how he was made to feel welcome and valued.

And the way staff feel about their jobs was a theme behind much of what he had to say in an impressive round up that covered pay, recruitment, career development, retirement and the Fellowship.

On pay he was pleased to see some movement from the government. “It is important because we need to compete to attract people to come and work for us” he said. “It’s been five years of one per cent and two years of nothing. We all know that living is more expensive.” But the issues are not just pay: there’s a set of things employers need to do as well:

On turnover he said there had been an acceleration in turnover and for the first time in

his career more people were leaving the NHS than starting. The NHS was struggling to recruit and people already in it were making other choices.

Among the reasons people gave for leaving were pay, career progress, and work life balance. The NHS needed to “love new starters to death,” and it needed to do more to help flexibility on working hours, and predictability rather than uncertainty.

On recruitment the NHS had always had a diverse workforce with people from Irish or Caribbean backgrounds surrounding his own childhood, while today many were from Europe. Brexit had introduced uncertainty – as soon as the vote was known they stopped coming. The drop in the value of the pound and the improving economies of European nations added to the problems.

Wherever they come from, potential recruits

want to know “If I come, can I stay? Can my family come? And these uncertainties hindered recruitment.

More needed to be done domestically to make it easier for people to come and work in the NHS and to make entering nurse education and apprenticeship schemes more attractive.

On ethical issues there was something to be done about the way people are treated. “One of the greatest things is about being part of a team. It’s about how the team feels it is being treated and how they treat each other. We have some issues in the service, some of that is frustration and about how people behave under pressure.”

There needed to be the right kind of performance management (not bullying) and there needed to be equal opportunities. Despite all the pressures, however, staff surveys showed most people enjoyed their work. “It’s a tribute to the people who lead their teams. It’s the commitment of the individual to the work they do in teams that keeps people coming to work. Hopefully we can continue that for another 70 years.”

Lively questions

In a lively question and answer session Danny said getting the numbers in **nurse education** right had always been a problem. Once we trained too many, now we train too few. “We have not covered ourselves in glory over this” he said.

On social care there had been a signal failure to plan for the rapidly increasing demand and successive governments had not been able to grasp it.

On waste he said the NHS had huge variations in clinical practice and we had to get better at doing things that we know work.

And on NHS paperwork, which some said had taken over nursing, he said the NHS rightly demanded a high level of regulation and inspection. But we had been relatively poor in the use of technology so nurses can spend more time with patients. *Danny Mortimer is also a trustee of the Fellowship.*

“Better than anti depressants”

a round up of current Fellowship issues

The most useful and relevant “Question Time” panel discussion for years focussed on ideas and problems facing members and branches in a 75 minute session ably chaired by Patron Ken Jarrold.

On the panel were Margaret Moffat (chairman) George Kempton (vice chairman) John Rostill (chief executive) and Paul Farenden (treasurer).

Centralised subs Christine Harper, (Suffolk West) asked why couldn't the Fellowship have everyone pay subs directly to central office by standing order, and then send back to branches the bit that was for them.

George responded that it would put a lot of pressure on central office, especially as branches all had different needs. John thought the idea had merits – and because there was a lot of opposition, did not mean it was wrong. They'd be talking to branches.

Dorinda Richardson (Peterborough) asked if there could be a guarantee that the subscriptions rise would not be repeated. John said no absolute



Members were keen to have their say at both the AGM and the “Question Time” session.



The panel fielded some worthwhile questions.

guarantee, but there might need to be an inflation-linked rise one day.

Wider community: Carole White (Royal Berkshire) wondered what the Fellowship could do for the wider community. “The clue is in the title” said George. “We have a lot of single people who value fellowship. Loneliness and isolation can lead to depression. We are better than a packet of anti depressants.”

Nick Spencer, (Brent) a former primary school teacher, said the NHS had so many wonderful

people who would be welcome in the classroom to tell their story – and maybe leave the thought of an NHS career with the children.

Struggling branches: Branches also asked for help for branches which were “struggling” financially or for numbers or because members were all growing older. John said they should seek central help, and he could also write to nearby trusts. “Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.”

Sponsorship: Could the Fellowship get more sponsorship? We are getting some from the Civil Service charity and we had links with insurance and cruise lines. The search goes on.

Sporting links: George Wakefield (Oxford) suggested there should be more sporting links. If there was a Fellowship golf competition, why

not bowls or other sports? It could happen, but someone had to step forward to organise it. Margaret added: “We tried bowls a couple of years ago but nobody was prepared to organise it.”

How many closed? Pam Holroyd (postal member) asked for more information on how many branches had closed and how many members have been lost and gained. Accurate figures will be available in 2018.

Summer AGM: Jenny Hull, (Coventry) asked if the AGM could revert to the summer (to general murmurs of approval) but John explained that getting up to date financial information available sooner would be difficult, unless we changed the financial year, which Paul said could be difficult and involve cost.

Dual branch membership: Brenda Rance (Watford) asked about members who belong to more than one branch – do they have to pay more than one capitation fee? The answer was no. Just tell central office.

More conference news on pages 8 and 9

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Members join hospital project

Fourteen members of St George's Hospital branch took part in the launch of the "Picture of Health" project exhibition at the hospital in June. Two members, Maggie Kelly and Cecilia Brown, were invited to Radio London's Jo Good programme to speak about their experiences as nurses who came from the Caribbean in the 50s and 60s. They hope to be invited back soon to talk about the NHSRF and its 40th anniversary.



Maggie Kelly and Cecilia Brown, who were interviewed on Radio London



Members with the children who illustrated a book produced for the exhibition.

Busy Brighton on



Brighton and Hove City branch held their first photo walk in the Sussex Downs at the Devil's Dyke.

Our picture taken by Peter Sheppard, shows members enjoying the space in the foyer of the Jubilee Library in Brighton for the 100 years of the NHS and 40 years of the Fellowship.

Cosham in court ... and Poole in the dock

Members of Cosham branch visited the Supreme Court in London in September and admired the building and listened to an enthralling talk by their guide.

Members found the building, the former offices of Middlesex County Council, had been beautifully and tastefully re-designed including carpets designed by Peter Blake, illustrator of the Sergeant Pepper album.

The court decides on points of law and can spend days discussing the meaning of a single word – for example in the meaning of the word "regular" in the Isle of Wight case about taking children out of school in term time. As Cosham is only a short distance across the Solent from the island members were highly engrossed – it could affect their children and grandchildren. A recommended visit.



Poole Branch also enjoyed a day in London including "a fantastic tour round the Supreme Court." Our picture shows them in courtroom two with the Supreme Court emblem.

Edna, 95, still ac



Edna Eckersley, lifetime president of Coventry branch

Edna has served the Fellowship at branch and region level. She was poorly at a meeting before Christmas when members brought flowers – so they went to see her at home instead.

The branch holds regular raffles and in our picture Edna is seen with Judith Missenden (a trustee of the Fellowship) and Rosie Brady who are delighted to see her.

Quiz start for new branch

The new branch at the Royal London Hospital started on 1 August and members enjoyed a quiz at their first meeting. The branch has an enthusiastic committee of seven with Pamela Hills leading as chairperson.



AROUND THE BRANCHES

top of the Downs



geographic day in August which took them to the top of

ers enjoying the view. The branch has already booked for two weeks next July for its exhibition featuring 70

Active in Coventry



celebrated her ninety fifth birthday in December.

al level and is still an active participant – but she was planned to present her with a celebratory cake and

na joins other committee members presenting £1,000 of the Coventry Resource Centre for the Blind and also to accept the cheque on behalf the charity .

Liverpool celebrates first five years

Liverpool branch celebrated its fifth anniversary in September with a party attended by Margaret Moffat, NHSRF vice chairman and her husband Tony, who came to share the day.

Looking forward to the next five years are: l to r Lynne Abraham, members secretary, Barbara Smart, branch secretary, Margaret Moffat, and Margaret McKie, chairman.



New branch sets off well

A new branch at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital is up and running with a committee of five led by the chair, Jo Stuart.

Members enjoyed a fun quiz at the hospital in November and started officially on 1 December. A Christmas meal was being held in December and a branch meeting in January.

The branch was set up by Sally Bundock, development officer and Lorraine Taylor, regional representative, with enthusiastic support from the human resources team at the hospital.

Diamond couple



Don and Audrey Allaker, members of East Herts branch, who both worked at the Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Welwyn Garden City, celebrated their diamond wedding in September.

Open day stand attracts interest

West Middlesex, Hounslow and Spelthorne branch members attracted a lot of interest to their stand when they took part in the West Middlesex University Hospital open day in September. There were many enquiries from NHS staff, few of whom knew about the Fellowship.



The poster used to attract interest at hospital open day

Golden wedding

Jennifer and Graham Deats, members of Basildon and Thurrock branch, recently celebrated their golden wedding with a party attended by family and branch members.



Apologies to Lancaster

Thank you to Edith Farrar from Lancaster branch for unravelling the mystery picture in our last issue – and apologies to all members for overlooking their 30th anniversary.

Somehow it got lost more than a year ago when the branch sent in the picture from May 2016 featuring Edith with branch secretary Freda Addison who always made a cake for the anniversary every year. There was another high cake this year, but sadly that will be the last, as the branch is closing in March 2018.

“I hope one or two members managed to recognize me” writes Edith – “I was deputy chairman of Leeds branch before moving to Lancaster 14 years ago, where I have been treasurer for nine years.”

Conference and AGM

Benevolent Fund savings limit under review

How much should it be possible for members to have saved up before they break the threshold for applying for help from the Benevolent Fund?

The current level is £4,000 which some members at the AGM thought was too low, and others thought about right, bearing in mind the fund only has assets of about £24,000.

It's an issue the fund trustees have thought about themselves over the years and will be part of a review being undertaken by Fellowship Treasurer Paul Farenden in 2018.

Chairman Cynthia Matthews, presenting her last report before handing on to Audrey Harris explained that the fund existed to help members in need, faced with a sudden and unexpected

demand like broken spectacles or a washing machine breakdown. It has a maximum grant of £800 and you apply in confidence, by filling in a form to explain your circumstances. You don't have to provide proof and extensive documentation, it's done on trust that the information is correct.

Last year the fund received donations of £240 and awarded three grants totalling £1,337. It has a balance of nearly £24,000. Applications are usually responded to within days.

Members asked whether the form was too complex (it was revised a few years ago) and that will be looked at as part of the review. Information about the fund has featured regularly in the national newsletter, but branches were also encouraged to promote it locally.

Do you have views about the Benevolent Fund? Write or email to Fellowship Central Office to contribute to the review.



Cynthia Matthews reports on the benevolent fund

BRIEF REPORTS

Why they left

The reasons why some branches had closed or left the Fellowship following the vote to increase capitation were more than just money.

"Some left because of the increase in capitation, others felt they were not getting enough support from their own members and they could not get officers. Some bigger branches left because they thought they could do a better job and they did not need the umbrella of a national organisation" explained John Rostill

Closing branches had found some innovative ways to spend money before it reverted back to the NHSRF charity. Where it had been spent inappropriately the Fellowship was pursuing it on behalf of members.

Branches which leave the Fellowship but continue independently will not be able to have "NHS Retirement Fellowship" in their title. The Fellowship is registering its copyright ownership and will take action if necessary.

A challenge to members

Chief Executive John Rostill issued a challenge to members as he began his report: step forward before midnight and become a Regional Representative.

"We have vacancies in North Wales, North East, and Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire, and by electing George Kempton as vice chairman there is now a vacancy in the South West.

"I can't emphasise enough how important that role is as a conduit between branches, national council, myself and the trustees. It's not as onerous as it might appear – it's all about linking with branches and sharing information.

"I shall take it as a performance indicator if between now and midnight somebody comes up to me and says 'I'd like to be a regional representative.' And I shall not know how much they have had to drink at that stage."

Latest update: the party atmosphere took over on Saturday night and no-one took up John's challenge. The search continues.

Another reason to be excited

The Fellowship has at least 70 members who were working in the NHS on the day it started in 1948.

All of them have a story to tell and responses came flooding in to central office after branches were asked to identify members who were there at the start. Lucy, and Sherry in central office have been talking to all 70 and brief records of their story have filled 13 pages of spreadsheet.

Now John is extending the request to other members – anyone who wants to share memories of whatever era that can be used as part of the 2018 celebrations, is invited to contact central office.

"A number of stories will be shared with NHS England" said John. "I'm hoping that on 5 July 2018 from Breakfast Time to Newsnight every news channel will include reference to the retirement fellowship."



Grant Whiskin

NHSRF insurance deal popular

Around 200 members have taken advantage of the special terms of the NHSRF World Wide Travel Insurance which is open to members aged 50 to 79 and their families.

It required a direct debit arrangement, but once you have joined, there is no upper age limit.

Grant Whiskin, who helped to establish the arrangement which is under written by Acasta European Insurance Company, told the conference: "It's a mutual business arrangement. It's a quality project that the people behind it have put a lot of effort into. We have had the best part of 200 join since we launched in October."

North Beds best newsletter

A simply designed and clearly presented newsletter from North Bedfordshire won the trophy for the best branch newsletter.

The judges praised its useful content, good use of pictures and the innovative “cut out” page which served as a flyer to hand to prospective members. A warm, welcoming and informative publication produced by Linda Hiscott and Jill Stephen.

Second was Suffolk West (“clear, legible and to the point”) and third Northampton, which comes in A4 and A5 size.

Janet Wilkins accepted the trophy from Andrew Moss, editor of the NHSRF newsletter, on behalf of North Bedfordshire.



Conference over - the partying began



Members who remembered the Easybeats (and that was most of us) took to the dance floor energetically as the veterans of the popular 1960s group played a string of their top ten hits.

As our picture shows, Suffolk West members in particular stormed on to the floor with balloons commandeered from the table decorations, during the disco which carried on the dancing till midnight.

The Saturday night entertainment followed a powerful performance on Friday from singer Scott Conrad which also prompted members to get up and dance – but only after Ethel Armstrong had led the way.

A cake for Gordon

Gordon Jackson, former chairman and president of the Fellowship reaches 90 in June so the indefatigable Ethel Armstrong baked and iced a sensational cake which was on display at the conference.

Gordon joined the Fellowship in 1984 after he was “made redundant” by Margaret Thatcher’s reforms which demanded more accountants and fewer administrators.

Prompted by his personnel officer, he immediately set to work to found a branch of the Fellowship (Barking, Havering and Brentwood) and then became a regional representative and a regular attendee at conference.

These days he is a valued member of the Rotary club of which he was secretary for 30 years and tends his allotment. It’s the brain stimulation that one provides and the physical the other that keeps him going, he says.



The spectacular cake made and iced by Ethel Armstrong

Anne wins champagne prize



Fellowship member Anne Wilde was the lucky winner of a bottle of champagne and a box of glasses in the Fred.Olsen Cruise Lines champagne competition.

The cruise company were delighted with the enthusiasm with which members clustered round their stand and the interest shown in the NHS Retirement Fellowship cruises next year.

Pictured here are Anne receiving her prize from Ellie Fulcher, Sales Manager Groups for Fred. Olsen.



Gordon and Glenys

Thanks to Alan

Most of the pictures at the conference were taken for the Fellowship by Alan Crossley, a member of the North Manchester branch who has frequently featured in the competitions of the Photography Group. We are very appreciative of his hard work which kept him busy all day, and the quality of the pictures.

Five new trustees for the Fellowship

Five new trustees have joined the board of the NHS Retirement Fellowship. They are:



Mercedes Madden

Mercedes Madden

Mercedes is vice chair of Mid Sussex branch. She trained as a nurse in Northern Ireland and has since worked extensively in primary care on innovative projects such as Harrow Long & Healthy Life and fundholding in North West Thames; she later co-authored a book on fundholding.

She has worked in primary care as a GP facilitator, in a clinical audit unit and various GP practices, a hospice, and now in an oncology unit. She is also a parish councillor, chair of a League of Friends and chair of a local village hall.

David Paterson

David is treasurer of the Forth Valley branch in Scotland and of Forth Valley Advocacy, a local charity where he is a volunteer independent advocacy worker.



David Paterson

He worked in NHS general, primary health care and property management, including estates, capital planning and managing capital projects.

He was previously a board member of the Scottish Association for Mental Health and of the Falkirk and District Association for Mental Health where he is currently a volunteer befriender.

Chris Kitchin

Chris has worked in primary and secondary care for most of his working life. He is chairman of East Hertfordshire branch and was previously a trustee of a number of other organisations.

His NHS experience included human resource management and training, management of hospitals and primary health care, disaster planning, change management and, more recently he chaired a patient participation group. Other experience includes being a secondary school



Chris Kitchin

governor, magistrate, member of Hertfordshire Police Authority and of an NHS Trust Involvement Committee, HealthWatch Hertfordshire and PLACE surveys.

Audrey Harris

Former NHSRF chairman Audrey Harris, well known to many members, has also joined the trustees. She is a member of Basildon and Thurrock branch.

George Kempton

The Fellowship's new vice chairman, also becomes a trustee.



Audrey meets the captain



Audrey with Black Watch captain Age Danielsen

Like all first time cruisers, the Fellowship's former chairman Audrey Harris had to have her picture taken with the captain as they sailed on the Fred Olsen ship Black Watch to north German rivers and Heligoland in September.

"We were really impressed with the ship" said Audrey, who was joined by her husband Martyn, "although small, it provided all that passengers needed. It was able to travel close into the towns of Hamburg and Bremen and we did not have to board a tender to get ashore. The food was very good, entertainment excellent and the cabin very comfortable."

"The weather was excellent (I might not have felt the same if the north sea had been rough) but I would recommend this type of holiday."

Lottery win "a lovely surprise."

Grace Stimpson, a former member of the Fellowship has found her life brightened by a £2,000 win in the St Ann's Hospice lottery – the NHSRF partner lottery.

"It was a lovely surprise after a difficult year" she wrote to John Rostill, Chief Executive. "A month before I had lost a much loved stepfather so it helped to lighten my mood. To say I was surprised was an understatement. I play the lottery because it is such a good cause and having had experience of having a relative nursed in a hospice in Yorkshire I knew the standard of care, something I'll be forever grateful for.

"I am happy to share the story of my good fortune. My grandchildren, I have four, benefitted straight away. The delight on their faces was worth every penny. We also paid someone to trim our massive garden hedge. Although very capable I didn't want my husband, who has now turned 70, climbing ladders. Another heartwarming moment. I'll certainly carry on subscribing to the lottery. Thank you, and carry on with the sterling work you all do."

The Fellowship benefits from the hospice lottery which costs £1 a week. To join see details on the NHSRF website or call 0161 498 3641.

OBITUARIES

Irene Adamson

Irene Adamson, who was chairman of the Fellowship from 2005-7 and president from 2007-9, died on 17 November.

After a distinguished 60 year career in nursing and with nursing charities, Irene joined Worthing branch of the Fellowship and was later a forceful regional representative for South West Thames, promoting the cause of the Fellowship wherever she went.



Irene in her nursing career

Irene as NHSRF chairman

When she was elected national vice chairman in 2003 and retired from her regional representative role after 12 years, members at a regional meeting paid warm tributes for her work. Typically, Irene in return thanked them for their interest and enthusiasm.

One of her major contributions to the Fellowship was as founder of the Benevolent Fund in 1995. She was its first chairman and established it as an important part of Fellowship, providing help for members in a crisis.

Irene always remembered that branch members are key to the Fellowship's success, and wrote in her Christmas message in 2006: "Our members are absolutely fantastic. Branch life centres on social, welfare and educational activities but many members are also involved in charity work for others. They are a great crowd."

Vivienne Brook

Liverpool Branch is very sad to announce the loss of one of its founder members, Vivienne Brooke, 94 who worked as a Medical Secretary in Broad Green Hospital.

Viv loved to join visits to special places in Liverpool and particularly enjoyed the visit to the Western Approaches where she worked as a WREN. Viv became a WREN aged 18 in 1941 and was one of the last six veterans of the Battle of the Atlantic, to receive a special award at a ceremony in London in 2015.

Always a very elegant lady, even in later life when she became ill, she always made sure she had her hair done and was dressed immaculately.

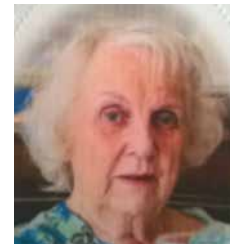
Dr T. Rasamuthiah (Ras)

Members will be sorry to hear of the death of Ras, as he was known to friends and colleagues, long time deputy chairman of South Bedfordshire branch. He was a founding member, helping to recruit members and persuading the Luton & Dunstable Hospital to provide a meeting room and refreshments.

He continually promoted the Fellowship and regularly served refreshments at our meetings. The local community also benefitted from his enthusiasm for helping people as he was a member of the local Older People's Forum and the local transport users committee, vociferous in the defence of bus passes for the retired and the guided busway. As Vice Chairman of the North West Thames Regional Group, he was interested in the national role of the Fellowship and attended conferences. He also took part in Fellowship holidays with his wife, Betty, who died a few days before him. The branch will miss his input and service.

Jeanette Hawkins

It was such a shock for members of Basildon and Thurrock branch to hear of the death of Jeanette Hawkins, just two days after attending a luncheon



club where, with her husband John, she was arranging the next date and venue.

Staunch members of the branch for many years, Jeanette and John organised the monthly raffle and helped with the annual holiday arrangements, but it will be her gentle kindly smile that will be most missed.

Many members attended her funeral, and John has continued his close association with the branch and has gained strength from the Fellowship.

Terry Denton

Terry Denton, who was a much-respected, cheerful and courteous member of Oxford branch died at the end of November aged 83. He had previously been a diligent membership secretary and was excellent company at any branch event.



He was a man of many talents who pursued educational goals throughout his life, working at both the Radcliffe Infirmary and later the John Radcliffe Hospital, where he was administrator for the Nuffield Department of Medicine. He had a passion for music and was an able pianist and organist, playing the organ in churches, the Sheldonian theatre and Oxford prison and for the annual medical students pantomime.

Apology

Our sincere apologies to the families of Margaret Fordham and Frances Dawson and their branches for the incorrect placing of the photograph of Frances (East Surrey) which appeared with the obituary for Margaret (Peterborough and District). We know that branches take great care in sending us reports of valued members they have lost and we very much regret the error.

Cheltenham reach 39



Cheltenham, the Fellowship's longest running branch, celebrated its 39th anniversary with a tea party in October.

Cottage holidays offer

A reminder that the Fellowship has teamed up with cottages.com and Hoseasons to bring members a 10% discount on UK breaks.

Secluded hideways, coastal cottages, and larger properties for family gatherings are among the 15,000 properties in UK, France, Italy and Ireland in the cottages.com collection.

To book a cottage visit www.chooseacottage.co.uk/NRF or call 0345 268 1595 and quote PART10.

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Peterborough's Nigel Gardner scoops Current competitions landscape competition

The winner of the competition on the theme of "landscape" was Nigel Gardner from Peterborough branch who submitted an atmospheric picture "Meadow Frost". Runners up were Norma Garthwaite from Edinburgh and Ruth Tyrrell from Norwich. The judges gave Highly Commended awards to Alan Crossley, Jill Evans, Lynne Abraham and Maureen Salmon and honourable mention certificates to Peter Elkington, David Thomas and Maureen Salmon.

The photography group is running two competitions. The first is on the theme "Portrait" featuring pictures of one or more individuals or even animals. The second is in recognition of the 40th anniversary of the Fellowship so the theme is "The NHSRF 1978 – 2018" Entries may be current or from the past and should show some aspect of the NHSRF that can be used in our 40th anniversary celebrations. The closing date for both competitions is Friday 9 March 2018. Full details and entry forms are available on the website or from Photography Group Coordinator,

Anthea Zell Tel: 01520 722951 or email: photography@nhsrf.org.uk

Photography days proving popular

North Manchester branch will host the annual photographic day in 2018 on Thursday 7 June: information from Anthea Zell, email: photography@nhsrf.org.uk tel: 01520 722951. The photography day last June, organised and hosted by Sue Williams in Birmingham, was a great success; the winner of the best picture from the day was Janet Bradley from Bedford branch with her photograph of New Street Station.



Winner: Nigel Gardner's atmospheric picture "Meadow Frost"

Gwen plays her part in archive project

Gwen Crossley, a member of North Manchester branch has been contributing to an inspired project being led by the University of Manchester to capture the memories of people who played a part in the first 70 years of the NHS.

The university has been funded by the Heritage Lottery fund to record interviews with people in Manchester and South Wales and Gwen volunteered to take part after listening to a talk at a branch meeting.

The aim is to create a digital archive from interviews with staff and patients. Gwen has been recruited as an interviewer and after a period of training she has been out with a digital recorder talking to all sorts of people.

"It's not just to publicise the NHS it is also for future researchers" she said. "If we don't capture this now, a lot of it will be lost for ever. I am very much enjoying it – it is something I never dreamt of doing."



Gwen Crossley

Gwen herself has been interviewed, and took the chance to promote the Fellowship. Other members of the branch have also featured.

Recordings for the project, called "NHS at 70 From Cradle to Grave" have been made under strict ethical rules but will eventually form an archive available for others to listen to.

Social reading in Liverpool

In 2015 a few members of Liverpool branch were interested in getting together to sound out the possibility of starting a book group where they could meet up and discuss their mutual interest in reading.

They wanted to broaden the types of books that they read and at the same time make it into a social event. They decided to see if it was possible to do this through the local library.

They discussed it with the library and have made an arrangement to have as many copies as the library holds, anything from eight to nine books, which they can loan for up to three months. There are now seven or eight members and it is working well.

The library supplies a list of books available and members tick the ones they would like to read. This forms the following year's reading list, which the library can order months in advance.

Meetings are held in a local cafe, but because some of the books also have films on DVD one of the members kindly invited the group to watch the films at her house. They have coffee on arrival and discuss the current book, have lunch and then watch the film.

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