

THE NEWSLETTER FOR CARDIAC FRIENDS



Spring 2017

Notes from the Chairman

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New Year greetings to you all and how the years are flying by. This is the fourth spring letter I have written, it just seems like yesterday I did the first. It is lovely that January has passed and at long last the evenings are drawing out, spring flowers are starting to bloom and when the sun shines it has some warmth in it.

I hope all of you who came to the Christmas Party enjoyed it as much as I did! I thanked everyone on the night for all they did to make it a very special evening but for the record I wish to thank all those who helped with the event but especially Janet and her team for organising and preparing the food, which was lovely, Mary Davis, our line dancing teacher, for giving us a lively and fun half hour of dancing and Katie Burden, who takes Heart Song, for getting us all involved with a couple of winter songs, even to getting you all singing in a round. It was great watching all your faces the concentration was something to see. That is one of the reason we all enjoy Heart Song it stimulates 'the little grey cells' as does line dancing. Thanks also to Ruth and Gaynor for organising and running the raffle and to all those who contributed to the prizes. See the secretary's notes for the sum raised etc. We will definitely be going for the same venue next year as it was delightful and no parking problems!

On a more serious note, Norman Webster who volunteered to take up the post of Treasurer at the last AGM has taken the decision to stand down. Norman had no accounting experience when he took up post and worked very hard to get the system of accounting used by Cardiac Friends under his belt spending long hours with the two previous Treasurers. His accounts were fine. Fortunately Norman met a very nice new member to our group, Adam Kuzminski, on the Richard the Third trip last summer. Norman sat next to Adam on the coach and it turned out that Adam is a retired Accountant. He then offered to put himself forward as Treasurer if the committee agreed. Having met and chatted to Adam I asked him to come to a committee meeting and meet the rest of us. Adam spent some time with Norman and Anne Harrison going through the programme used and going through the accounts so he was well prepared for the meeting. An extra Committee meeting was called before Christmas and Adam was duly co-opted on to the Committee as acting Treasurer up to the next AGM. Norman will stay on the committee until then. His wife Hilda breathed a sigh of relief. Thanks Norman for taking on such a task!

While on this note Dinah MacKellar has after all the years she has put in as an active leader of groups and, of course, her long run as Founder and Secretary of Cardiac Friends, has decided to stand down from organising and running Theatre Trips and Places of interest. Dinah's health has not been the best over the last few years and she now thinks enough is enough. I wish to thank her profusely on all our behalf for the time and energy she has put in to making Cardiac Friends a lively and active organisation. I know she started almost every activity and others have taken them over during the years. Her spirit will always be an important part of Cardiac Friends. However all is not lost as Adam has also volunteered to take over this group. Adam already has a similar role in another organisation and is very happy to give his time to Cardiac Friends to provide opportunities for shows and places of interest. He will be looking to organise theatre trips outside of London as well as to continue looking for those in London. Watch this space!

In late autumn Peter Howard, Heather Cotton and I attended a National B.H.F. workshop at their headquarters in London. The concept of the workshop was to find out what type of Heart Support groups were out there, how they operated, raised funds and recruited and to look for any good practice from one to the other. It was an excellent day and we were surprised to find that some of the support groups, Milton Keynes for example, have their own premises and run all the first and second phase re-hab. They deal straight with the hospital and the patients are forwarded to the group. It was however

purely an exercise group. It is run in a very sophisticated way with dozens of trained volunteers to run classes, plus having accredited trainers. Other groups also recruited by actually going into the hospital. The training that the Milton Keynes group has provided is funded and run the County Council. There are other groups similar to ours but not with such a varied provision of activities and BHF were very impressed with our website and came back to me to find out how it was set up. It is a great credit to Peter that the site is so well run and to all those who lead and run our full range of activities. As well as the above we had a lecture by a dietician, Victoria Taylor and by Dr Rebecca Richardson about "Using Zebrafish to help us fight coronary disease." Peter, Heather and I all enjoyed the day and if anyone wishes to go the event this year we will post the details later. No two events are the same

It has not been a good start to this year for some of our members and I just want to say my thoughts are with all those who are suffering severe health problems at this time and for all those who are caring for them. Heather has written more in her report so I will not repeat it.

The next AGM will be on the 7th of June at the Fortescue Hall in Letchworth. Once again we are holding the meeting in the afternoon as it is so hard to get evening venues. As before tea, biscuits and cake will be provided. I do hope as many of you as possible will be there on the day to give your support and any ideas to the new Committee. I do intend to stand as Chairman again but if there is anyone out there who would like to take over please contact me or one of the Committee. I do enjoy being part of Cardiac Friends and the group is helping me through a difficult time and I wish to thank all of those who have been so kind and supportive.

Jackie Quinn

Notes from the Secretary

Dear Friends,

It was great to see so many familiar faces at the Christmas Party, and to put faces to familiar names. I hope you all enjoyed it, because that makes our work worthwhile. A donation of £200 has gone to the Herts Air Ambulance from the Raffle.

I'd like to record my own gratitude to Dinah, especially for her kindness when Fred and I joined Cardiac Friends.

I sent out 31 e-mails to members this year; 11 were re events in the newsletter, 4 were BHF surveys, 12 were news about poorly members, 1 about spam, 1 about our new Treasurer, 1 an offer of painting equipment and 1 the updated Reference Sheet. It is physically not practical to send out letters every time - the postage per person would be £16! But it does mean some members who are not on e-mail miss out. Our leaders pass on verbal information already. But if you cannot get e-mails, do you have a friend in the Group, who would give you a copy? If you can read e-mails, but not open attachments, please tell me, and I will put them in the body of the text for you - it usually works.

Yes it is four months away, but the renewal letters will be coming out at the end of March, to give the full eight weeks until the AGM at Fortescue Hall Letchworth on 7th June at 2.30pm.

Mike Patmore and Beverley Stainer are recovering from a knee and a hip operation respectively at the moment and we wish them well. Mac Varley has suffered a life-changing stroke, and so has Doug Cook, whose status is not good. I will try to update you as I hear from Mac's friends and Margaret, but our thoughts are with them.

On a happier note, can I welcome John Barton, Jacqueline Burns, Doreen Collins, Susan Craig, Jean Foley, Marjorie Hone, Pat Merritt and John Steadman and Mr and Mrs Nash, who have joined us since the last Newsletter was issued.

I hope the grey weather will lift soon. If you suffer from S.A.D. the experts say try to get outdoors in the morning.

I offer you my belated wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Uneventful New Year.

Heather Cotton

Line Dancing

Thank you to everyone who joined in the line dancing at the Cardiac Friends Christmas party. It was generous of Mary, our instructor, to come along to show what happens on our Saturday morning fortnightly sessions at the Willian village hall. As

you could see from the demonstration it is an excellent way to get some good exercise, stimulate the brain cells and have fun at the same time!!

We had a new member join the group on our first line dancing session held in January which was a great start to the New Year 2017 for us.

The cost is £6 per person which includes refreshments of tea/coffee and cake.

Janet Savage:

Email cardiacfriends@hotmail.co.uk

London Walks.

We met with Kim in January and spent a working lunch to produce a programme of six walks for 2017. The London Walks members have all been sent details of the walks this year already, but for those of you who have not until now considered a pleasant leisurely stroll in our capital city then why don't you give us a ring or drop us an e-mail at the contacts below.

We have our own London Blue Badge Guide, Kim, who is an extraordinary mine of information and the walk finishes with an enjoyable lunch at the Wetherspoon pub the Sir John Oldcastle, Farringdon.

We are delighted to report that "Chambers Coaches" **will not** be closing and will continue to provide their excellent transport facilities, picking up in Hitchin, Letchworth and Stevenage, and you will be amongst friends all day! We are usually home by 6 o'clock.

Cost remains a modest £18 each, plus the cost of your meal which must be pre-ordered using our menu which can be provided on request - altogether, superb value!!

This year's programme:

Sunday 9 April	"Gruesome London!"
Sunday 7 May	International Soho
Sunday 11 Jun	Kensington Gardens
Sunday 9 Jul	Doing the Lambeth Walk
Sunday 3 Sep	'The Bolton's'
Sunday 1 Oct	Little Venice to Camden Lock (with a surprise!)

For further details: Ruth & Barry Brown

Gaynor & Barry Tinsdale

cardiacfriendswalks@outlook.com

Bits and Pieces from Dinah

It is with regret I have decided to step down from organising the 'Theatre' and the 'Places of Interest' Groups. This has been a hard decision to make and I have been thinking about it for some time. I have always loved organising many of the groups for Cardiac Friends since we started in 2001. Gradually over the years I have asked others or they have volunteered to take over a group when necessary. My decision has been a sad one to make, but fortunately Adam Kuzminski has volunteered to take on these groups - so we are all able to look forward to more Theatre Trips and other visits in the future.

I have decided to continue contributing to the newsletter in the future. No longer anything to do with Cardiac Friends, but anything else I think you may find interesting or fun to read.

Practical Tips Using WD-40

1. Often, when writing with a permanent marker, you will notice the ink runs through the paper onto the surface below - staining it!!!

Or, you write on a freezer bag with a permanent marker pen, prior to freezing - then when taking the frozen bag out at a later date to defrost, have you left it on the worktop in the kitchen? Without thinking you leave it with the writing against the work surface. As the food defrosts, the ink stains the work surface!

Rub with WD-40 and the ink will be removed.

2. Try using WD-40 to remove paint from most surfaces, especially vinyl and plastics. It will also remove glue and parcel tape. Spray with WD-40 to keep mud from sticking to your boots.

Sweet Potato and Parsnip Soup

Ingredients: 1 tbsp. oil

1 large leek, washed and sliced

2 celery sticks, washed and chopped

1lb sweet potato, peeled and diced

8oz parsnips, peeled and diced



Method: Put the oil into a large saucepan and heat gently, add the vegetables and cook for 5 minutes, stirring. 1½pts vegetable stock - add, simmer for 25 minutes.

Cool. Liquidise. Add some freshly milled pepper and sea salt to taste. Serve and enjoy.

Dinah

Heartsong

We were thrilled to be asked to 'perform' at the Christmas party back on November 25th and lead some seasonal singing. Katie, our leader, had rewritten the lyrics to the famous Sophia Loren/Peter Sellars duet, 'Goodness Gracious Me' and turned it into a kind of Cardiac Friends Anthem which we all sang. The last verse is very apt;

'As well as medication, we need some friends who share,

A similar situation and who really do care.

So with our Cardiac Friends we go singing everywhere

We go.....Boom diddy boom, etc.'



The Gloucestershire Wassail was next and there were quite a few questions in the days afterwards about what 'wassail' means. It comes from an Old English phrase meaning 'good health'. Groups of mostly young men would go around their town or village around Christmas and New Year and toast the health of not only the human inhabitants but any livestock as well in return for some reward, usually food and top-ups of the 'wassail (drinking) bowl'. As you can imagine things could get out of hand after a while, especially if the hosts weren't welcoming or generous - as in one of the Wassail's verses:

'Come butler, come fill us a bowl of the best

Then we hope that your sole in heaven may rest

But if you do draw us a bowl of the small (= weak beer)

Then down shall go butler, bowl and all.'

We finished with a rousing chorus of 'We wish you a merry Christmas'.

In our well-attended January session we took the opportunity of celebrating Burns Night, although I'm not sure that the Scottish bard would have approved of the selection - 'Mary Mack', a short and fast tongue twister of a Glaswegian street song followed by 'Football Crazy' made famous in the 60s by Robin Hall and Jimmy Macgregor. Then followed a beautiful New Year Carol with music by Benjamin Britten and we finished with Woody Guthrie's famous folk song, his ode to America, 'This Land is Your Land'.

Our next **HeartSong** session is on **Friday March 24th**, 2-4pm at **Holwell Village Hall**, a few miles north of Hitchin off the A600. If you would like to attend contact **John Burden** on 01462 712187 or email burdjohn@hotmail.com

Wednesday Walking Group

Following our walk we had an excellent Christmas lunch on Wednesday 7th.December at 'The Rising Sun', 36 of us enjoyed this festive occasion, which was only marred by Peter Elmer falling and hitting his head. An ambulance was called; fortunately Peter was well enough to go home after the incident.



We continue to attract new members; unfortunately some of our long time members have either had to limit the distance they walk or just join us for lunch. Whatever, it is good to keep them' on board' for the social aspect. Malcolm Varley had a stroke on Christmas Eve, ending up in Lister and is now at Danesbury Neurological Centre at Welwyn. He sustained a blood clot on the left side of his brain; he appears okay and will talk quite well to you but is not able to receive any information. I am trying to put out 'progress reports' to all his friends. We walked at Stotfold recently and unusually had steady light rain throughout the walk, It was a very miserable morning but nevertheless 23 people turned up to the walk! I have been trying to keep us out of

the mud and in fact on the Stotfold walk had intended going through Etonbury woods, in the event because it was so wet we stayed on pavements and roads. As always, my thanks to Mike who holds my hand on the proving walks, Also Cyril, Kingsley and Iain Druce for sharing the load. That last word sounds awful! It is not a 'load' it is a pleasure. The pictures show some of the 36 who enjoyed the 'Walkers Christmas Lunch and The Memorial at Tempsford unveiled by Prince Charles to the Women who went to War from RAF Tempsford, our next walk on February 18th.



On 28th September we answered the nationwide call by the BBC's programme 'Countryfile' for a mass ramble on 8th/9thOctober. Ours took place on 28thSeptember to coincide with one of our regular Wednesday walks. I have recently received a letter and certificate from BBC Children In Need, thanking us for our donation collected on our 'Ramble'.

Fred Maryon



Exercise Group

Once again we have a very good number attending our class. It is a fun group and a good place to have a chat while giving the body a

workout. Please come and join us on Thursdays between 2 and 3pm at Letchworth Leisure Centre in the Pembroke Suite. The more the merrier. Please note you do not need a doctor's letter but must get verbal permission to come to class if you have any conditions that could be affected by exercise. Come along for a free taster and see if you enjoy it. As we are now numbering twenty one on the books we have reduced the fee again to £18 for six weeks.

Sadly we have lost two of our most loved members, Margaret and Doug Cook. We miss Margaret's chatter and Doug's sense of humour. We all wish them both well and send our love.

Jackie Quinn

Monday Walkers/Tuesday Swimmers

These groups are still running and if you would like details of either of them, the contact details are:

maggianddavebullen@talktalk.net

STOP PRESS!

Cardiac Friends Quiz evening - contact details below

Our next Quiz is on Tuesday 14th March

Ian Sanders cardiacfriends@hotmail.co.uk

Theatre Trips and Places of Interest

I am proposing having our first trip for 2017 a little further away in Staffordshire. The National Memorial Arboretum is our destination and it covers 150 acres with over 330 memorials. Included in the cost is a 50 minute 'land train' tour with pre-recorded commentary. Attached you will find one A4 sheet with a brief itinerary and booking form, on **page 7** of this newsletter. I would appreciate an early commitment and payment from those who are interested. Of course you can contact me if you have any questions.

Email to: cardiacfriends.co.uk

Adam Kuzminski

Finally...

Don't forget the Social Evening - Tuesday 25th April. Cost £7.50 Includes refreshments

The speaker, Sheila Parker is a former Tiller Girl. This is her second visit to the Cardiac Friends.

"The Rock and Roll Years"

Gossip from the fabulous 60's. Sheila talks about her marriage to a Pop Star. She also talks about starring in a pantomime in 1964 with Cliff Richard, The Shadows, Harry Secombe and others at The London Palladium. Sheila will show photos and programmes of the time.

Venue: Howgills Quaker Meeting House
42 West View
Letchworth Garden City, Herts.
SG6 3JJ

Contact Mrs. Heather Cotton to reserve your seat
cardiacfriends@hotmail.co.uk

From the Newsletter Editor

I do hope you have found the newsletter informative, and I look forward to receiving your contributions in the future. If you feel you have something of interest to add to the newsletter, please do send it to me. Also, if you change your email address please let the Secretary have your new address and if you are unable to **open attachments**, then you can have a printed copy, by letting either the secretary or myself know. Due to the cost of postage and printing, and the time it takes to run off printed copies, it is preferable to use email.

Ruth Brown