



## October 2025 Chairman's Report

Shorter days; longer nights and dropping temperatures: these are the collective sign of the approaching Winter season, when some of the normal popular outdoor activities of our group such as petanque and the Sunday London walks are reluctantly put to bed until next year.

Unlike last year which was one of excessive rain and cooler temperatures, this one has been quite the reverse allowing many of our twice-monthly petanque sessions (booked for the very reason to avoid the disappointment of being rained off) to go ahead with success. The Sunday London walks have also been carried out rain-free and we feel very lucky, since there is only one occasion over the 20 plus years that these walks have been running, that a walk had to be suspended because of the weather. I think there might be a deity somewhere up there who is a sponsor of Cardiac Friends!

I know many of you show an interest in our garden, and despite our personal trials and tribulations this year, we still managed some time to work on, and enjoy it. A project that we are particularly pleased with is the progress with our latest planted shrub - a *Cornus Kousa* "China Girl" that is now in its third year and beginning to display its worth. It has two phases of flowering over the Spring and Summer, firstly when creamy-white bracts appear on the leaves, and later when these bracts mature into red strawberry-like berries. An interesting and most attractive transition.



In the first year we had no bracts at all and I surmised that perhaps the tree was not suited to our location, but the second year saw 2 bracts appear, so we reluctantly gave it a chance to prove itself, and this year - joy of joys - the tree was absolutely laden with bracts and looked spectacular!



We were so impressed with the display, that whilst on holiday in Weymouth in May, we had the chance to buy a second one; this one called "Milky Way." It is in a large pot rather than in the ground but nevertheless has already displayed its bracts and has increased in height as well. Their future looks promising.

All of the Cardiac Friends activities continue to run successfully, with only minor disruption to the swimming and exercise groups, both of which have been hostage to the upgrade to facilities at the Letchworth Leisure Centre. These are nearing completion now so hopefully we can get back to normality before too long.

Many of you are aware that we have been going through a particularly trying time with our daughter Beth, who came back from a weekend trip to Bucharest in March, with no recollection of where she had been and displaying general confusion and memory loss. She was diagnosed with an extremely rare form of encephalomyelitis which had caused 3 lesions on her brain. She was hospitalised and later spent a period of recovery at the Danesbury Neurological Centre in Welwyn over an extended period of 6 months. Thankfully she is now at home, not fully recovered, but getting there slowly with the help of friends and family. We have been asked constantly over the months how she was progressing and more recently, many of you have talked with Beth and welcomed her into your respective groups when we have joined you, simply to give her an introduction to something approaching normality. Ruth and I cannot express our thanks enough as you have been extra-ordinarily supportive over these past 6 months. We both feel that Cardiac Friends really are friends to cherish!

**Barry Brown**      [cardiacfriends.chair@outlook.com](mailto:cardiacfriends.chair@outlook.com)

### **Secretary's Report.**

I can only echo Barry's thanks for all your support during a very difficult time over the last 6 months.

I have recently renewed our membership to the BHF group network. This is a useful network which allows us to advertise our support group on the BHF website, at no cost to ourselves. We have in the past gained some members through this website. Attached to this newsletter is the invitation to your Christmas party and the committee will have put in a lot of work by the time the day arrives and we all look forward to an enjoyable evening with you. Please respond with your payment and any dietary requirements in a timely manner. **Please bring your own dishes for the buffet.**

**Ruth Brown**

### **Theatre Group**

No theatre trips have taken place for a number of years but I still have not given up hope for the future.

### **Places of Interest**

A two hour boat cruise took place on the Great Ouse in Bedford on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2025. 43 members attended and we all had a very enjoyable experience. An additional bonus was that one of the boat volunteers Steve Elliott and his partner Sue Thomas have since become members of Cardiac Friends. A similar boat cruise might possibly be arranged for next year.

## Holiday 2026

We will be having another Warner holiday in 2026. It will be for 4 nights commencing on 20<sup>th</sup> April and will be at the Bembridge Hotel on the Isle of Wight. These Warner holidays are proving to be very popular and 50 Members have now paid the deposit to attend. For this holiday our tour guide Kim will not be with us but we will still have a full itinerary which has still to be finalised.

## Finances

The Accounts for the year to 30 April 2025 were accepted by our members that attended the AGM in June.

Since the 30 April 2025 there have been no significant financial transactions and our available cash balance is currently a healthy £4,000.

**Adam Kuzminski (Treasurer & Membership Secretary)**

## Monday Morning Walkers

Our next walk on Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> October will be from Fairlands Valley Lakes. This suits our members so we go to Hitchin, Stevenage or Langford which all have a variety of great walks. We commence our walks at 10.30am and usually walk for no more than an hour and then off to enjoy a coffee and chat. It is great that we have two new members because the group is gradually getting smaller.

You will be most welcome to join our happy bunch of walkers so please contact **Maggi Bullen**.

E: mail: [maggibullen7@outlook.com](mailto:maggibullen7@outlook.com)



**Tuesday Afternoon Swimmers.** The pool at North Herts Leisure Centre has re-opened but, - **and it's a big but,** - there are no changing facilities for non-members!!

The new 'Family Changing Village' will not be ready until sometime in December and the suggestion from the pool manager to arrive 'swim-ready' and change by the poolside, I find totally unacceptable.

This being the situation, I have therefore decided to suspend our sessions until the New Year. Our first get together will be on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January. Also, as there are no funds left to subsidise the swims, the cost per swim will be at the senior's rate which is presently £3.80.

**Pete Howard.**

## Quiz Night - Tuesday evenings



The quiz nights have become very popular now that they have been hosted by the owners at Churchill Retirement Living, Dovehouse Lodge, Wratten Road West, Hitchin, SG5 2EJ. The next quiz night is on **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 starting @ 7pm prompt**. We usually finish by 9.00 p.m., so it is not a late night. This will be the last quiz of this year. We ask for a contribution of £1.00 per person which goes towards the Owners' tea bar, as they host us with tea and coffee. Jackie Sanders also supplies home-made cakes.

**Ian Sanders**

## Wednesday Morning Walks

The walks continue to go ahead, numbers at lunch are still usually 15- 25 though only approximately half of those do the walk, some do a 'short walk' and others just join us for lunch, and that often includes me. However, we maintain our fellowship together which was my aim in encouraging everyone in the group to come to lunch.

The walks continue to be led by Mike Morley, Cyril Savage and Peter Dawes, supported by their carers. A recent addition to our team of leaders is Christine Druce; she has been a stout member of our VIP Cardiac Walkers who do the 'proving walk' the week before we inflict it on the group.

I still keep my hand (if not my feet) involved, by liaising & organising with the landlords to arrange our bookings. I have done some of the walks but it is difficult as I have to arrange someone to stay with Joyce.

Unfortunately the choice of venues does not get any easier as a number of our favourite routes have lost their pubs which are closed, or temporarily are not providing food. At least three of our favourite walks are no longer available as in one case the pub does not open for lunch until Thursday! and both of the others had said they were opening for food from May 2025, but at present they are still not serving food!



On 24<sup>th</sup> September, I dedicated our walk from 'The Plume of Feathers' Ickleford to 'Children In Need.' The group very kindly donated £224 (including 'Gift Aid'). I have received a 'Thank you' from PUDSEY which is attached.

I have booked our usual Festive Lunch at 'The Rising Sun' for Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December and have sent out the menu and members are advising they are joining us.

### Fred Maryon

#### Exercise Group - Thursday Afternoons

Firstly I would like to thank all those from the class who have continued to attend through the last few months through the disruption due to the major works at the Leisure centre. In spite of the disruption the classes continue to be a friendly and pleasant way to get exercise to help keep us flexible and active. Emma, our instructor, has organised our Christmas lunch at Hitchin Garden Centre on Wednesday 26 November. They do a lovely roast! We would love it if you joined us on a Thursday at 12.30. You would receive a very warm welcome.



### Jackie Quinn



#### Petanque & Games Afternoons - Friday Afternoons

By the time you read this newsletter, the Petanque season will have come to an end as we only play during the Summer months, it being very much a weather-dependent activity. Last year there were several occasions when adverse weather - either too hot or too wet - had a detrimental impact on our bookings, so as an insurance against weather-based cancellations this year, we arranged 2 sessions per month rather than the single sessions of the past, and this has worked well. We aim to resume the activity next year starting in April at the usual venue, the PAR-3 Family Golf



Centre on Willian Way, Letchworth. Look out for more information including dates with next year's Spring newsletter edition.

Over the winter months we will continue our indoor games afternoons that feature any table-top board games that you may wish to play. These are held monthly on a Friday at the Black Squirrel Café, Pioneer Nurseries Baldock Lane, Willian (behind the Three Horseshoes Pub) from 1.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Costs nothing although it is a reasonable expectation that you purchase drinks/snacks from the café.

We have been advised that this might be restricted in numbers due to the increasing popularity of this venue for regular customers, so we may need to investigate other locations to accommodate us should it become necessary.

The first date booked is Friday 21st Nov.

**Ruth Brown**

### **Coffee Mornings - Sundays**

The coffee mornings are ever popular and regularly attract 30 or more. They are always held at different locations and offer a social get-together on what for some will be a quiet day, particularly so for those on their own. All arranged to fill a 2-hour slot between 10.00 a.m. (when most venues open) and noon, although there is no reason whatsoever why you should not stay longer if you so wish. Some of those attending use this as an opportunity for breakfast out, whilst others are happy to stick with tea and cake. There is also the option to stay later and enjoy lunch. Whatever takes your fancy!

This year we enjoyed a new venue at "Mulberry's Café" in Walkern

Although more remote, this was a great success and we will no doubt book there again. We have also increased the coffee mornings to twice monthly during the winter months when we have no Sunday London walks.

The following dates and venues have been booked:

2<sup>nd</sup> Nov at Shuttleworth Café, Old Warden Airfield, Biggleswade, SG18 9EP.

17<sup>th</sup> November at the M&S café, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage.

14<sup>th</sup> Dec at the newly refurbished Hitchin Garden Centre, 'The Gardeners Retreat'.



**Barry Brown**

[cardiacfriends.chair@outlook.com](mailto:cardiacfriends.chair@outlook.com)

### **London Walks - Sundays**



In February, the four of us met with our outstanding London guide Kim Dewdney. She knows our abilities, stamina, interests and sense of humour! So we put together a group of walks or

should I say strolls or even wanders, to 6 varied locations in our wonderful capital. We were able to marvel at diamonds which none of us could afford! Then back to the history around the Royal Albert Hall and the stories around Victoria's beloved husband. (and nobody realised we changed the destination at the last moment). Walk 3 in glorious sunshine, was in Holland Park with its rose gardens and magnificent artwork which was followed by another luxurious area of Chelsea with the houses of the very rich. In stark contrast our next location was Bermondsey with its industrial history. And so to walk 6 where we completed our Shoreditch trip to see the huge variety of street art.

London is amazing. If you have ideas of any areas or themes or histories that would be of interest to the group, please tell us. We thank you for the kind comments we receive.

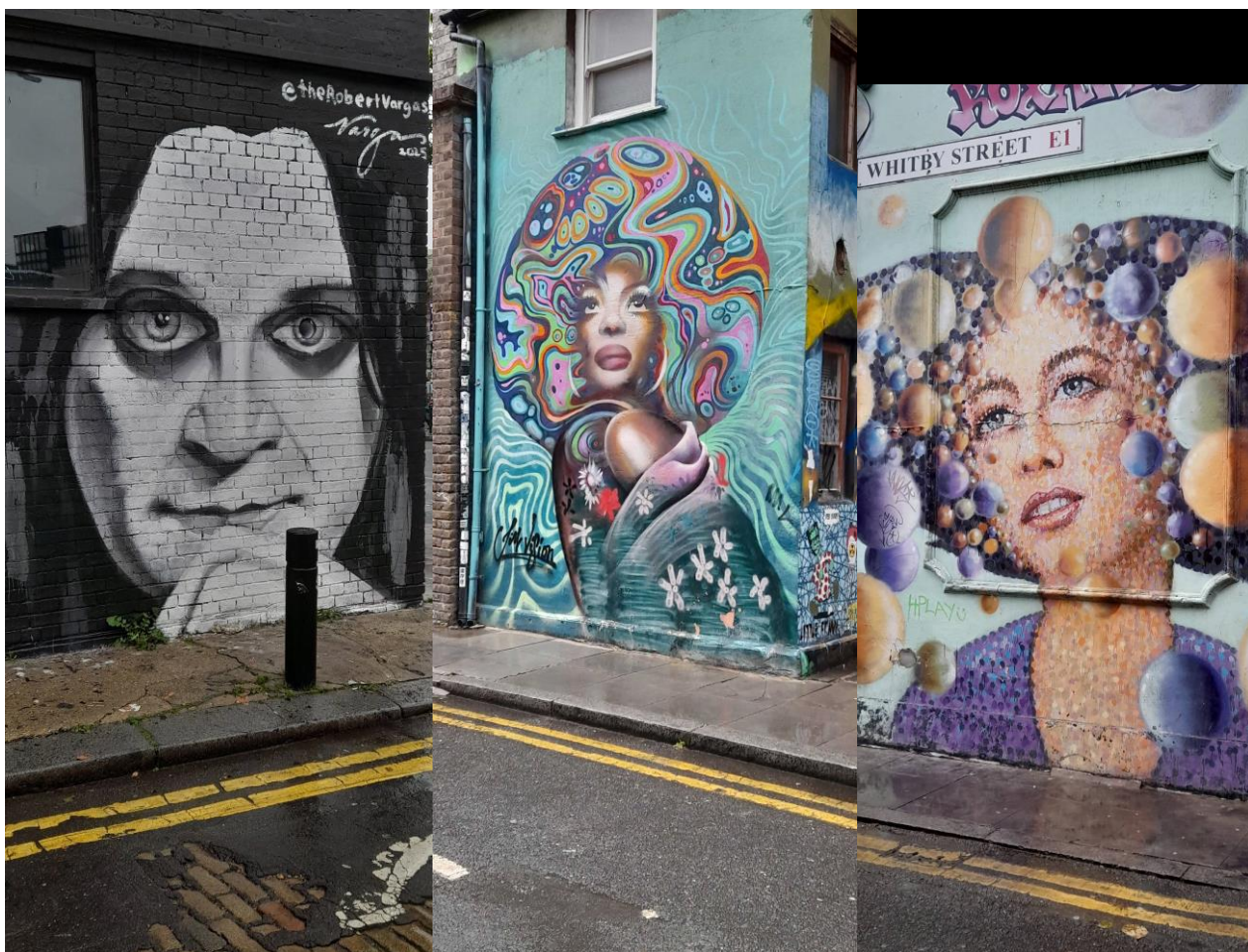
Barry x 2 and their wives!

The London walks team will enjoy a well-earned rest over the winter months before meeting up with Kim sometime in January/February at Sir John Oldcastle for a working lunch to plan the 2026 season of walks which will be our 13<sup>th</sup> year. Keep your eyes open for details which will be sent out in the Spring around the time of the newsletter in March/April.

**Barry the elder and Gaynor Tinsdale** 01462-62777

**Barry the younger and Ruth Brown** 01462-812599

**The London Walks Team:** [cardiacfriendswalks@outlook.com](mailto:cardiacfriendswalks@outlook.com)



**Late addition - Three of the street art works we saw on 19<sup>th</sup> October in Shoreditch.**

**Line Dancing - Saturday Mornings.** Having gained two new members our Line Dancing group is now 15, meaning that we have healthy numbers each session.

We continue to meet on the first and third Saturday mornings in the month in William Village Hall from 10.00- 12.00. The cost is £8 pay as you go. Mary continues to lead us but is really just one of us. We enjoy dancing old favourites but she regularly teaches us new ones to keep us on our toes and our brains active!

If you would like to join us there is still plenty of room, whether experienced or beginner, and you



would be greeted with a warm welcome for enjoyable exercise, good for both body and brain, and a very pleasant break for tea, cake and a chat.

**Shirley Williams**

### ♥ HEARTSONG REPORT for 2024/25

The format now is to hold just 3 sessions per year at **Howgills, the Quaker Meeting House in Letchworth, 2-5pm on Saturdays**. The March session was very successful with 35 attending including most of the core group from HeartSong. The next session is on **October 25th**. The full cost is about £20 but for HeartSong and Cardiac Friends members it is just £10. As always, there is no need to be able to read music or to be an experienced singer as the aim is primarily to improve health and well-being - so do come along for some fun!



Details are in the poster or contact me, **John Burden**, by email: [burdjohn@hotmail.com](mailto:burdjohn@hotmail.com) or via the website [www.therosewindow.org/events-contact](http://www.therosewindow.org/events-contact)

**SINGING WORKSHOPS**  
With Katie Rose  
Saturdays 2-5pm  
Spring: March 29th  
Summer: June 28th  
Autumn: Oct 25th  
Letchworth Quaker Meeting House  
Howgills, 42 South View, SG6 3JJ  
[www.therosewindow.org/events-contact](http://www.therosewindow.org/events-contact)

**Editor: Ruth Brown 21/10/25**



