



NEWSLETTER



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Left: 'Life on a Harp String' - harpist Margaret Watson entertained members at a recent meeting. She allowed them to get up close to her instrument and delighted her audience with adaptations of music as varied as J.S. Bach's Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring and Glenn Miller's Chatanooga Choo-Choo

From Joan Robinson, Branch Chair



At our AGM on May 8th, I was re-elected to serve as your Chairman and Secretary for just one more year. Thank you to all who nominated me.

Two long-standing committee members stood down at the AGM after many years' service. Margaret Steele resigned as Treasurer and handed over the branch books to Liz Yates while Deanne Beaver passed the Social Secretary's role to Alison Cass. Thanks to Margaret and Deanne, the branch is in good financial standing and enjoys an interesting programme of activities. I pay tribute to their hard work and success and welcome to Liz and Alison to their new roles.

On July 5th the NHS celebrates its 70th anniversary. All branch members have been invited to attend a tea party that afternoon at the Three Arches Restaurant on the first floor at East Surrey Hospital. And I'm sure I don't need to remind you that there will be a branch garden party to celebrate the Fellowship's 40th and the NHS 70th anniversary on August 14th at 111, Honeycrook Lane, Salfords.

My Fair Lady at the Harlequin Theatre, Redhill on May 3rd

A large group of members recently enjoyed a performance of My Fair Lady at the Harlequin Theatre. Although it was an amateur production, they were unanimous in agreeing that the East Surrey Operatic Society's standards were truly professional. The action moved swiftly along the multiple scene changes as the cast sang and danced their way through the well-remembered repertoire, made famous in the West End and Broadway productions and the film starring Audrey Hepburn as Eliza Doolittle. This Eliza, Helen Nightingale, was making her debut with the company. Her excellent performance whetted appetites for future appearances. Members left the theatre singing and humming the words and tunes of the show's creators, Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, and thanking Deanne and Bob for organising another successful branch outing.

Right: Julie Andrews as Eliza Doolittle and Rex Harrison as Henry Higgins in the 1957 stage production of My Fair Lady

Before then, there will be a members' event on 28th June from 12.30 to 15.30 at The Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, Lambeth, London, SE1 8UJ. Members' events are valuable opportunities for sharing opinions and ideas so if possible please do attend.

This year, the Fellowship's AGM and Conference will be held in Chester on November 2nd and 3rd. Please let me know if you're interested in attending.

Your national newsletter contains details of the special holiday offer the Fellowship has negotiated with Della Holidays. If you wish to continue to receive the national newsletter and other head office communications, you must return the consent form that was sent out with the April national newsletter to head office. This is because of changes in the Data Protection Regulations. Similarly, please return your written consent to receive communications from the branch to me, otherwise East Surrey Branch cannot communicate with you in future.

My best wishes go out to all those members who are unwell and not able to attend our branch meetings.



A Profile of Joan Robinson, Branch Chair and Secretary since 2009

When Joan Robinson retires as Branch Chair and Secretary at the 2019 AGM, she will have held those posts for ten years. But her initiation as Branch Chair was somewhat inauspicious. Joan recalls: 'I became Branch Secretary and Vice Chair in 2008. Beth Boorman, who was the Chair, wasn't well and she died in December 2008. In those days, the Branch met in the Red Cross Hall in Maple Road, but no-one knew where Beth kept her keys to the hall. I had to contact the caretaker to get into the hall so we could hold our monthly meetings. I held an emergency committee meeting at my house.'

Under Joan's leadership, the Branch has grown from just 24 members in 2009 to 67 now. 'Most new members have found out about the Fellowship by word of mouth', Joan says. Joan has tirelessly led branch members in activities to raise funds and the Fellowship's profile for example holding car boot sales and providing a stall at the annual Armed Forces Day in Priory Park. However, Joan considers one of her best achievements is to have persuaded Michael Wilson, CEO of Surrey & Sussex NHS Foundation Trust, to be the Branch Honorary President. 'My persistence paid off' she says. 'Now the Branch has a positive link with the Trust as well as practical support with stationery supplies and postage.'

Joan's work for the Fellowship hasn't been confined to the East Surrey Branch. From 2013 to 2015 she was also the Representative for the South West Thames region at the Fellowship's National Council. 'I enjoyed my time as Regional

Rep enormously', Joan says. 'Visiting all the other branches in the region at least once a year was hard work but gave me fascinating insights. I was able to bring good ideas, like meeting and greeting members as they arrive at meetings, to East Surrey. And I was able to spot potential pitfalls and steer our Branch away from them. When branches were in trouble, I made a point of supporting them at every meeting for six months. Sadly Epsom branch folded, but Crawley recovered and is now thriving.'

Attending so many meetings, including every branch AGM, as well as chairing the six monthly regional meetings at Turners Hill and attending the quarterly Southern Liaison meetings in London with all the other southern regional representatives, took a heavy toll on Joan. 'Travelling was becoming more difficult as I became less mobile, so I resigned in 2015. Nevertheless, my time as regional rep certainly increased my confidence. I even gave a talk about the Fellowship to the Civil Service Alliance.'



Above: Joan proudly displays her Regional Representative trophy

Joan's work as a volunteer hasn't been confined to the Fellowship. Between 2011 and 2014 she was also a Trustee of the East Surrey Carers Support Association. Between them, East Surrey Carers and the Fellowship have greatly benefited from Joan's dedication - and her increased confidence.

News from SASH – Gillian Francis-Musanu at the branch AGM



At the well-attended branch AGM on May 8th members welcomed two visitors, Gillian Francis-Musanu (*left*), Director of Corporate Affairs and Company Secretary at SASH, representing SASH CEO and branch Honorary President Michael Wilson, and Ros Lobo (*right*), the NHSRF South West Thames Regional Representative.

Among her many responsibilities at SASH, Gillian oversees corporate communications and patient and public involvement. She brought good news about SASH's current situation. She told members: 'Although the past year has seen unprecedented levels of activity in the wards and A&E Department, staff have risen to the occasion to meet the demands placed on them'. She continued: 'In the national NHS staff survey, SASH was in the top four trusts in the country for the percentage responding, with 67% completing the questionnaire against the national average of 44%. Staff said they felt their efforts were recognised and they felt valued. Communication between staff and managers is good and annual appraisals are of high quality. SASH is in the lowest 20% of trusts nationally for staff reporting physical and verbal abuse from patients and visitors.' SASH is working to improve this position further. At the financial year end, the Trust was £8.1 million in surplus – money which can be spent on services and improvements.'

Gillian is enthusiastic about the Fellowship. 'When staff retire from SASH they receive a personal letter of thanks from Michael Wilson and information about the Fellowship. When I retire, I shall certainly check out my local branch,' she said.

Raising awareness of dementia

Members attending local GP and Dementia Champion Dr Anita Raina's talk on dementia in April were encouraged to become 'Dementia Friends', learn more about dementia and turn their understanding into actions to make a positive difference for local people living with dementia. Those who signed up to this Alzheimer's Society initiative may be interested in supporting SASH Charity's efforts to

create a dementia friendly sensory garden, 'Camomile Courtyard', at East Surrey Hospital. SASH is committed to becoming a more dementia friendly organisation and regenerating an existing garden courtyard space next to the care of the elderly wards will be one way of doing this.

To support this and other charitable projects linked to SASH, go to www.sashcharity.org

Forthcoming outings

July 10th Summer outing to Pevensey Bay and Eastbourne. Coach will leave the Angel at 10:30; cost £28, pay by June 12th.
August 2nd at 19:30: *The Phantom of the Opera* at the Harlequin, Redhill; cost £14, pay by June 12th, please.
August 14th Garden party at 111 Honeycrook Lane, RH1 6JN. Bring a chair; if you can lend a gazebo, please tell Alison Cass.
September 18th Coach trip to Bluewater, cost to be confirmed.
October 18th Ten pin bowling at Crawley, cost to be confirmed.
November 27th Salisbury Christmas Market, cost tbc.

Branch meetings: June 2018 – April 2019

June 12th	The forgotten village of Duxhurst, near Reigate
September 11th	Healthy heart matters
October 9th	Battersea Dogs & Cats Home
November 13th	Healing properties of honey
February 12th	The Palace of Westminster
March 12th	Foot care
April 9th	Healthy eating

Branch meetings open at 10:00 on the second Tuesday each month at Reigate Baptist Church

***Editor: Janet Lambley
janet@the-lambleys.org.uk
07710 268467***

***Welfare officer: Angela Saich
01737 242869
Outings organiser: Alison Cass
01737 760745***