



**West Berkshire Heart Support Group
Newsletter - Summer & Autumn 2017**



The West Berkshire Heart Support Group is an independent Charity dedicated to supporting heart patients and their families. It is affiliated to the British Heart Foundation, and associated with the Department of Cardiology, Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading.

Registered Charity Number 1124770

www.heartbeats-berkshire.co.uk

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Pictures on the front page :

- 1) Jean-Pol Grandmont - His own work. Acer Japonicum var. Vitifolium. Autumn, Wikimedia Commons.
- 2) Haymaking Late summer. Haymaking in a field beside Chapel Lane. Copyright Philip Halling and licensed to re-use under the Creative Common Attribution-ShareAlike

DELAY IN PUBLISHING

The Editor apologises for the delay in publishing the Summer edition. This was due to unforeseen domestic circumstances. At present there is no member to provide editorial backup.

HEARTBEAT WESSEX

The Trustees and Group Committee members of the West Berkshire Heart Support Group (Heartbeats) wish to inform members and the public that they have no connection with Heartbeats Wessex that supports the Cardiac Department at Southampton Hospital.

LUNCH AT TOBY'S CARVERY, LOWER EARLEY, READING

If any member of other branches would like to join the WWE Branch for lunch at any time, please feel free to do so. Let us know and we will book you a seat. It takes place at 1 pm on the 4th Wednesday in the month.

Chris Nash Mobile: 07775575647

NO NEWS FROM NEWBURY BRANCH

We have received a disappointing message from the Secretary of Newbury Branch. She has told us that the computer she uses to type her reports has crashed and the engineer who was called to fix it has failed to do so. She will submit a full report for the next edition.

Sorry to learn this Jeanne but these things do happen Editor.

News from Reading Branch

Meetings held on the 1st Tuesday in the month starting at 2.30pm
at Calcot Community Centre, High View, Calcot, Reading

Forthcoming Events:

Tuesday 7th November-Thames Crossing-Tony Weston.

Tuesday 5th December - The Munday Musical Evening

On Tuesday 4th April we were entertained by June and Ken Brazier who spoke about his fund raising climb up Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa.

Ken started by referring to the talk on Mercy Ships he had given last June. The hospital ship Anastasis spends most of the time on the west coast of Africa where there are many poor and deprived people. The ship is fitted out as a state of the art hospital with operating facilities to serve the local community. To support the project Ken decided to go on a sponsored climb of Mt Kilimanjaro. It is 20,000ft high and stands alone. It is not part of a mountain range. It is a very large mountain covering approximately 40 square miles. As a regular walker Ken thought the climb would be no more than a grand fell walk. This did not prove to be the case. About 30,000 people a year try to walk up the mountain and some of his age die in the attempt. Altitude sickness is the problem. If you get it you should descend as quickly as possible. The tour operators did not pull any punches and warned him of the dangers of going. Ken found the operators on the website. They were not the cheapest, but they seemed well organised and paid their porters a living wage. They answered all Ken's questions properly and fully.

The group consisted of twelve walkers supported by no less than 43 guides and porters. Everything had to be carried on people's backs; all the tents, poles, cooking equipment and the food. The trip took six days there and back. You can imagine how much food was needed to feed them all.

Ken was at least 25 years older than anyone. He was the old man of the party. Sometimes this can be a problem as he was viewed as the weakest link. All the nights were spent under canvas and the first night at sub-zero

temperature. They had seven tents. Normally a pair of walkers of the same sex would share a tent. But in his case there was a problem as he finished up paired with an American lady. They each had a tent for one! Before he flew out he was interviewed by a journalist from The Bucks Free Press, their local paper. They printed an article which amazingly was absolutely correct! They also printed a billboard advertising his climb.

The problem with walking up Kilimajaro is that you start in a tropical rain forest. At the top you are in arctic conditions. Ken clothing and equipment had to be suitable for both. The most important equipment was boots and socks. His trousers had detachable leg bottoms to make them into shorts. He had special shirts used by long distance walkers and cyclists and two telescopic walking sticks. These were necessary to prevent sausage finger syndrome which can affect walkers who walk for a long time without something to hold in their hands. The sticks are adjustable in length. Going up you need them slightly shorter and longer coming down. Ken carried a water carrier on his back. It had a flexible pipe fitted to it to enable him to suck water to drink when needed. Also necessary were a waterproof jacket and trousers. Because he did a good deal of long walks he had other items needed. A vital piece of equipment was a head torch to leave both hands free. The tour company recommended a four seasons sleeping bag. Ken was concerned about the water quality and purchased some purifying tablets for his water carrier.

Ken showed us some slides of his visit. They started with the trip in the land rover to the entrance to Kilimanjaro National Park. There was a warning notice board listing the things walkers should and should not do, for example "If you have a sore throat don't go higher than 3,000 metres. If you are over a certain age go home! Be sure to drink 4-5 litres of water a day. Hypothermia is a regular problem so you need a lot to drink. Don't leave any litter. Leave nothing but your footprints and take home only your memories." When they started the guides walked very slowly. This was to acclimatise the walkers to altitude. If you tried to pass the guide he showed you a yellow card! The first village was about 7,000 feet up.

The camp was already set up when they arrived, so they sat drinking tea and the guides brought out a large tray of popcorns. That night they had fish and chips. In the morning a porter brought in water for washing which was unexpected. He also surprised Ken by asking if 'he would like Betty in bed?' What he really meant was, 'Would Ken like bed-tea or tea in bed?'

Although there were wild animals about they did not see any. They came across a quantity of elephants dung on a track used by the animals.

The walkers were often drenched with rain. One of the tour company's requirement was that you carried a complete change of clothing in your rucksack. If you got wet hypothermia could be a problem. But at high altitude water evaporated quickly as you walked. It was often very cloudy, but occasionally it cleared so that you could see the summit of the mountain in the distance. It was very cold at night and on one occasion he needed to relieve himself. The longer he waited the stronger became the urge. Eventually he got out of his sleeping bag and went through the tent flap. What he saw amazed him. The air was crystal clear and the jet black night sky was illuminated by thousands of bright stars and the moon seemed brighter and nearer. He described it as an awesome experience.

Before they started out there was a fire on the mountain side which destroyed trees and animals. As they got higher the fire-smoke persisted and upset some walkers due to oxygen depletion. At one stage it was so cold that the water in his back pack froze solid. As they neared the top Ken felt the effect of altitude sickness but he recovered. He said that altitude can have a strange effect on people. Some of the group hallucinated.

When they reached the summit there was great rejoicing and walkers hugged and shook hands. The descent was difficult at times. They found themselves walking on loose scree. The sticks helped greatly.

Ken had hoped to raise £5,000, but due to the support and generosity of people he raised £16,000. Well done Ken.

Ken also gave his talk on Mercy Ships to our Newbury Branch.

On Tuesday 2nd May we had an interesting talk by Paul Kavanagh about the Carers Trust, HUB, an organisation set up to support unpaid carers in Reading and West Berkshire. They help anyone who is in difficulty doing his/her job caring for someone else. Paul explained that these people, often family members, did not recognise themselves as carers but were doing an essential job often on their own with no help. Carers, looked after the elderly and frail, and those with physical or learning disabilities. Some might be looking after a person who has mental health problems or is on drugs. Everyone at some time will be a carer. Some of them may be quite young. Caring for someone is very demanding and tiring. Those who do it need support. They should tell their doctor about it so that they can get and an early doctor's appointments. It is important to tell anyone who is a carer about the service available from HUB. Their service is confidential and mostly face-to-face. They can sometimes organise breaks for carers and may be able to arrange grants for equipment. Paul said that the first thing he had to do was to identify the carer. People who looked after a family member, for example a wife or husband, often thought that was what you did, but did not identify themselves as carers. Advances in medical treatment meant that we have an increasingly ageing population and more will need caring support. An important part of HUB's service is providing information about help available. There are about 350 organisations in the area doing support of various kinds. Questionnaire filling can be necessary and worrying for some. Paul said that he often visits carers to help them complete them. Another service was setting up support groups in the area. Carers who have met one another to chat found this very supportive. It overcame the feeling of isolation.

The Carers Trust is a national organisation, but funded locally by Reading Borough Council, West Reading Council, The NHS, North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), South Reading CCG, and Newbury and District CCG. There is a helpdesk on 0118 324 7333 where you can speak to an experienced support worker or arrange to meet one. The email address is ask@berkshirecarershub.org. The website is www.berkshirecarershub.org.

This was a most interesting and valuable talk by a care worker with considerable practical experience. *Please see Patient Carer research page 11*

On Tuesday 6th June Tony Keep came from the Thames Valley Police Museum, Sulhamstead, to give us a very well researched and detailed talk on the Great Train Robbery in 1963. Tony is a retired police officer who helps out at the museum and does talks and tours.

A great deal has been written about the robbery and Tony wanted to present a story that credited the work done by members of the investigating police teams without promoting the robbers involved. He wanted to distinguish the facts from the fiction and trace the events to the trials. The robbers all pleaded 'Not guilty' in court, but most of them wrote books about the event afterwards. Some of their details were wrong or exaggerated. Tony tried to get to the facts.

On the long distance railways there were red travelling post office coaches. Staff were employed to sort post as the train moved along from town to town. If the train did not stop, a system was used to pick up and deposit packages of mail as the train sped past. The train from Glasgow to Euston had money in the second coach behind the engine. On the night of the robbery it was carrying much more than usual. This was due to the UK bank holiday on the previous weekend. The load consisting of 128 bags full of used notes destined for London banks. The value of the consignment was £2.5 - £3 million. This was the robber's target.

The robbers were recruited and led by a Bruce Reynolds. He had planned the heist carefully over a long period to select a suitable place to ambush the train and let the group escape with the money. The location of the robbery was Bridego Railway Bridge, Ledburn, in Buckinghamshire. The chosen hideout was Leatherslade farm near Brill. It was 27 miles from the site of the robbery. The farm was for sale and a deposit of £5000 was paid to secure it and to ensure that the group had somewhere safe to hide with the loot.

At 6.50pm on Wednesday 7 August 1963 the train started out from Glasgow Central Station and stopped at various stations on the way south. At Crewe the driver Jack Mills and the 'fireman' Dave Whitby took over.

Earlier the gang dressed as soldiers on manoeuvres and drove vehicles they had repainted khaki. To stop the train they had to change the distance

signal to red. This was done by taking a bulb out and connecting a battery to the red signal lamp. Bruce Reynolds had information from an accomplice in Glasgow, so he knew when to expect the train. This was important as there were still trains travelling up and down during the night.

At 3am on 8 August the train came to the signal and Jack Mills slowed down the train and stopped. As they could see a green signal further down the line, Dave Whitby got down from the cab to ring the signal box to find out why they had a red signal. He found the phone wires cut but before he could return to the cab he was overpowered by members of the gang. Meanwhile men had entered the cab of the diesel train and one attacked Mills striking him on the head with a metal cosh. His injury was severe enough to end his career. They also overcame the three post office workers in the High Value Package Carriage (HVP) where the bags of money were kept. There was no means of communication between this carriage and the drivers cab or the guard further down the train. After the robbery there was radio communication between all these and the police!

The robbers had to move the engine and HVP carriage to a point over the bridge where the gang could unload the bags into the vehicles below. The driver they enlisted to drive the train was not familiar with the controls of the train so the injured Jack Mills was forced to move it. The robbers then moved the sacks into the waiting vehicles and drove away. The loading was timed precisely by Reynolds and some bags were left in the carriage and on the bridge. Before they left one robber warned the staff not to move for half an hour or they would be in trouble. This was an error of judgement as it suggested that the hideaway was not more than 30 miles away. Back at Leatherslade Farm the robbers celebrated by playing the board game Monopoly but with real money!

When the robbery was discovered, Detective Superintendent Mc Arthur and Detective Sergeant John Pritchard were sent to assist Bucks police search the area and they found Leatherslade Farm. Meanwhile the robbers had intercepted police radio messages and knew about the search. They had left the farm in a hurry. However they did leave behind some incriminating evidence . The police threw a cordon around the farm to stop anyone going in or items coming out.

Tony Keep told us about the work of the fingerprint officers and the need to photograph and match each print with those on record. This was before computers so it was a long and tedious task. Progress was slow and the Post Office General Reginald Bevins offered a £10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the robbers. A prisoner in a provincial jail and a woman gave the police 18 suspect's names. Their hand prints were matched against those whose prints were from Leatherslade farm.

The first of the gang to be caught was Roger Cordrey. He was a member of The South Coast Raiders and experienced at robbing trains. He and several others had been recruited by Reynolds. More arrests followed.

The principle robbers were Bruce Reynolds, Gordon Goody, Buster Edwards, Charlie Wilson, Tommy Wisbey, John Wheater, Jimmy White and Brian Field. The final gang numbered 16 men. They took £150,000 each as their share of the loot. It has been estimated that less than £400,000 was eventually recovered.

Against the robbers was the cream of the southern police force. George Hatherill Commander of C Department and Detective Chief Superintendent Ernest Millen, head of the Flying Squad, were in charge of the London side of the investigation. Detective Superintendent McArthur and Detective Sergeant John Pritchard helped the Bucks police force. Detective Chief Superintendent Tommy Butler quickly formed a six man Train Robbery Squad to investigate the crime.

Most of the principle robbers were sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Tony gave us a most interesting talk. He could have told us more but unfortunately we ran out of time. He reminded us to visit the Thames Valley Police Museum at Sulhamstead, Reading. There are items there connected with the robbery.

On Tuesday 4th July Tony King came to tell us about the History of the Cinema.

Tony King gave an excellent talk with a large number of photographs and film clips.

He outlined the development of what started as the Bioscope and became known as the Cinema. Initially silent films in black and white were the only ones available. Directors such as D.W. Griffiths and Max Sennett produced major dramas and comedy shorts. Stars such as Fatty Arbuckle, Rudolf Valentino and Buster Keaton were joined from the UK by Stan Laurel and Charlie Chaplin.

Attempts were made to make silent colour films but due to the massive costs this was not progressed. In the late 1920's technical development had progressed far enough so that the first "talking" picture was produced. This was the Jazz Singer.

The 1930's and 40's saw the development of the two major groups first the "producers" with names such as the Warner brothers, Daryl F. Zanuck and the Cohen brothers. The other development was the growth of the major studios such as MGM, Paramount, United Artists, Warner Bro's and Universal.

In the UK a similar growth took place under the control of Michael Balcon and J. Arthur Rank at studios based at Pinewood, Denham and Ealing Studios.

Finally we saw the development of cinema buildings in the UK and the growth of "Saturday" clubs

Our thanks to Ian Clay for this report. Editor.

We have received the following from a student at Portsmouth University. If any member would like to take part in the research contact the Editor for more information.

A Study of patient/carer involvement in GP surgeries and clinical commissioning groups. Who will be conducting and funding the research?

I am Jane Brooks; I am a trained nurse, although I am not registered at the moment as I am currently a post-graduate research student in the Portsmouth Business School at the University of Portsmouth. I will be conducting this research for my PhD. No organisation is funding the research

Annual General Meeting held at the
Calcot Community Centre, High View, Calcot, Reading
on Tuesday 16th May 2017

The Chairman welcomed the President Dr Jon Swinburn, Mark Brunton, Charge Nurse Cardiology Research and members present.

The President gave a summary of happenings in the Cardiac Department during the year. This included news that consultant Sasha Bull had given birth to two healthy daughters. A new consultant, Lindsay Tilling, had been appointed . She specialises in heart failure and helps with device implantation.

The Path Laboratory is to be replaced. This will give better imaging quality for less radiation and be better for patients. The hospital has decided to get rid of locums. Sadly, waiting time has increased as a result.

Another important development has been the establishment of a research department. If you do research properly it can benefit patients who take part and be profitable for the department. Mark Brunton was appointed to the role of Cardiology Research Nurse from the 1st July 2017. He has worked in the department for 20 years. The President then invited Mark to tell us about his work. He gave us the following summary:

The remit of the role was to begin to develop the portfolio of research studies and capacity for both academic and commercial research within the Department of Cardiology. The role had been envisaged as a full time role but with an initial fixed term of 2 years .

Research in the NHS is governed by the Health Research Authority (HRA) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This is broken down into local Clinical Research Networks (CRN's) we are part of the Thames Valley and South Midlands CRN.

Over the last year we have been able to recruit more than 100 patients (research participants) into four network adopted research studies, incorporating observational studies regarding medicine use after a heart attack , stents used for angioplasty procedures, *Continued on page 20*



Ken Brazier demonstrated the clothing needed to climb Mt Kilimanjaro

June Brazier showed the billboard advertising Ken's charity climb





Left, Paul Kavanagh who spoke to our Calcot Branch about the Carers Trust, HUB

Below, Steve Harris who spoke to our Newbury Branch about Noctilucent Clouds

Photo Jenny Madges





The Heartbeats President Dr Swinburn told the AGM what had happened during the year and the Department's plans for the future. These included a new Path Laboratory. This will give better imaging quality for less radiation and be better for patients.

Cardiology Research Nurse Mark Brunton told the AGM about his work in the newly formed research department in Cardiology. His research would benefit patients who take part and be profitable for the department.

Initial funding for the post was provided by Heartbeats.



***Departed Friends Douglas Barclay MacDougall,
Brian Iven Kingsnorth and Ted Ayerst,***

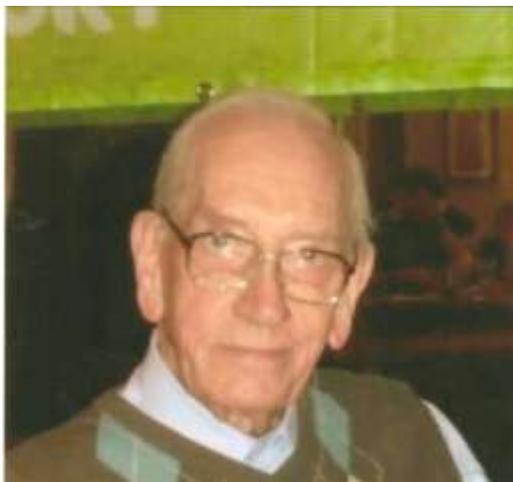


***Douglas MacDougall was born on
15th November 1934
and died 1st March 2017.***

***His funeral took place at the
Methodist Church, Wokingham on
23rd March 2017***

***Brian Kingsnorth was born on
31st December 1926
And died 18th April 2017***

***His funeral took place at the
Reading Crematorium, South
Chapel on 8th May 2017***



Ted Ayerst died on 30th May 2017

***His funeral took place at
St Nicholas Church, Sulham on 12th
June 2017***



Health Walking

Many heart patients and non-patients fail to appreciate the importance of regular exercise. We are not talking about an amble across the road to the newsagents for a newspaper, but a regular daily exercise.

One of the best ways to exercise is through brisk walking. A walking session needs to last for about 30 minutes and you should start slowly and gradually build up to a comfortable brisk walk. (If you have not exercised for a while, check with your doctor first) The idea is to gradually build up your pulse rate while still being able to talk. But you should walk at your own brisk pace. You are not in a marathon!

If you plan to join a health walk group for the first time, or after an operation or illness it is important to get advice from your consultant or family doctor. To make sure that this has been done, most group organisers will ask you to fill in a simple Health Walk Questionnaire.

The Health Walks in Prospect Park, Reading.

We do our walks every Thursday morning at 9.45 for 10 am. If you're new to our group or health walking, we ask you to be there a little before that to fill in an Outdoor Health Questionnaire. Our leaders are trained and approved by the Ramblers Association and the British Heart Foundation.

We have three walks. The first is for people who have not done brisk walking for a while. It is on fairly flat ground and is about half a mile long. The second is for those who feel they can manage a bit more. It is about a mile and a quarter long. The third is for the more energetic or practiced walker. It follows the boundary of the park and is about 2 miles long. There is a fairly short but steep slope half way round. We welcome anyone who is interested in taking exercise in a pleasant park and in safe company. You don't have to join the Heart Support Group to take part.

Membership of the Group

Our support group is open to patients, their partners and anyone interested in the support of those with cardiac conditions.

We invite you to come along to one or two meetings at Calcot, Earley or Newbury, to learn more about us ***before*** deciding to join. Please give your local secretary a ring to say you are coming. They are:

Reading for Calcot– Pam Maddock 0118 941 5951

Newbury - Branch Secretary, Jeanne Turvill 01635 861 546

Wokingham Woodley & Earley - Chris Nash 07775575647

Subscription

The annual subscription is £8.50 per person

The subscription entitles you, as a member, to participate in our meetings, social events and to receive our quarterly newsletter.

If you would like to join, please complete the form on the next page and send it with your cheque or postal order made payable to The West Berkshire Heart Support Group to:

Linda Higgs,
WBHSG Membership Secretary,
13 Bourne Road,
Pangbourne,
Reading RG8 7JT

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP PLEASE USE CAPITAL LETTERS

PATIENT'S DETAILS

TITLE: Dr, Mr, Mrs, Miss FAMILY NAME.....

GIVEN NAME

GIVEN NAME YOU WISH TO BE KNOWN BY

ADDRESS

.....

..... POST CODE

TELEPHONE NO

SUPPORT PARTNER'S DETAILS

TITLE: Dr, Mr, Mrs, Miss FAMILY NAME

GIVEN NAME

GIVEN NAME YOU WISH TO BE KNOWN BY

ADDRESS

.....

.....POST CODE

TELEPHONE NO

**THOSE WISHING TO BECOME SUPPORTERS OF THE GROUP ONLY
SHOULD TICK THIS BOX AND COMPLETE THE SUPPORT
PARTNER'S DETAILS**

SUBSCRIPTION IS £8.50 PER PERSON PER YEAR

Data Protection Acts

Please note that the information you have given is kept safely and confidentially on the Charity's computer. The data is used to correspond with members and to send them the Charity's newsletter. If you would prefer us not to keep your information in this way, please advise us.

Continued from page 12

A large cardiovascular and diabetes survey involving stress echocardiograms. By the end of the summer we hope to have four more studies. A number of these will be with large pharmaceutical companies.

During this time Mark has been able to make contact with colleagues in other research teams across the RBH and also the wider network. He has also taken part in a number of meeting with academic colleagues at the University of Reading. This to explore collaborative projects that may be possible in the future.

Lastly, Mark has been very fortunate to have the opportunity to apply for the position for 1 year as a Research Fellow for the Thames Valley and South Midlands CRN. This was an interview process and he was successful. Starting in September this will enable further time to be allocated to developing the department's research portfolio on behalf of the CRN at Royal Berks Hospital. This amounts to funding half of Mark's time for 1 year.

Mark concluded by saying that this had been a fantastic year of growth and development and one that he had enjoyed immensely. He took this opportunity again to thank Heartbeats for the generous contribution of funds that has enabled this project to take place and for on-going support.

Forty-two members attended the AGM including four officers.

Apologies were received from Chris Nash, Richard Davies, Jill Davies and Jean Rose.

The Chairman gave her report as follows:

During the year your Group has continued its important work of support and is in good shape. This year we have made substantial donations to the Department of Cardiology for the benefit of patients. I am sure you are pleased with that.

Membership. There are 202 paid up members in the Group this year. This is up on last year. Although we were set up to provide support for patient members and their partners, we have been pleased to welcome members who are not heart patients.

Organisation of the Branches

I am please to report as usual, the Newbury branch is going from strength to strength. This is due to the leadership provided by the Branch Chairman Derick Nobbs, his wife Jo and their active committee. We thank them for that.

Peter Adamson has continued his good work as Branch Chairman at Calcot. Sadly he has had to give up due to bad health. We thank him for organising group trips and interesting speakers. The new Branch Chairman is Ken Tudgay. His committee members are Ricky Davies as Vice Chairman, Pam Maddock as Branch Secretary. Also on the committee are Jill Davies and Pat Walsh. We thank them for volunteering.

The Earley branch now meets at the Toby Carvery at Lower Earley, at 1 o'clock on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Our thanks to Chris Nash, Fred and Brian for organising this.

Walking for Health

Our weekly walking group in Prospect Park is still doing well. 56 members came last Thursday. Brisk walking is a good way to improve circulation and strengthen the heart. Apart from the health benefits of walking, the walks provide a friendly social benefit. Walkers get together for a chat over tea or coffee. Many are solo. I would like to thank our eight volunteer walk leaders for giving up their time to lead the walks.

The Newsletter

The newsletter is important for members who cannot attend meetings. We would like to thank our regular contributors, Ken Tudgay on gardening and the branch secretaries for their regular branch reports. Another important contributor is photographer Bob Powell. He tries to attend all meetings at Calcot and Earley. We are also grateful to all who contribute to the newsletter through interesting reports and articles; some from as far away as Western Australia. Please keep them coming.

The Running of the Group.

I must repeat what I said last year that running the Group needs dedicated Officers and a Group Committee. I would like to thank Ian Clay for serving as Treasurer. Together with other Group Committee members he has continued to meet the requirements of various Acts and the Charity Commission. My thanks are also due to Linda Higgs for her work as Membership Secretary, and to Linda's husband John who keeps up the database, prints the labels for the mail-shots and maintains the Heartbeat website. Finally, on your behalf I would like to thank all members who serve on branch committees or carry out roles like tea making and washing up. Without you Heartbeats could not function. Thank you Beth and Joe Blackwood for organising refreshments; and thank you all for coming.

Treasurers Report on the Annual Financial Statement 2016 / 2017

This year has seen a small rise in the membership and in the amount received in donations.

Meeting costs have seen a substantial rise due to the need to include two years hall costs this year for the Newbury branch. Despite efforts by Group and Branch Officers it proved very difficult to obtain an invoice from the church authorities.

Social costs are higher this year due to two very successful trips organised in his usual very thorough way by Peter Adamson. I would like to thank him for all his work in this activity.

Donations to the Cardiology Department at the RBH totalled nearly £70K mainly directed at the purchase of Blood Pressure Monitors and the creation of a Cardiac Research Nurse. We are pleased to welcome Mark Brunton the newly appointed Research Nurse who will speak to us in a moment.

We also donated £500 to the Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

Finally I am pleased to note that we continue in a healthy financial position with assets of over £128K. I would like to thank all Branch and Group Officers for all their help and support during the past year, and especially Mr David Hobby of David Jones & Co our financial

advisor. In conclusion I propose that the membership fee continues at £8.50. President, Chairman, I have much pleasure in proposing adoption of this year's annual accounts. Seconder Jeanne Turvill. All members were in favour.

Election of Officers of the Group

The following were re-elected:

Group Chairman: June Drew-Clifton (Proposer Judian Bushnell; seconder Anita Schultz)

Group Treasurer: Ian Clay (Proposer June Drew-Clifton; seconder Peter Drew-Clifton)

Group Membership Secretary: Linda Higgs (Proposer John Higgs, seconder Peter Drew-Clifton)

Any Other Business: There was none.

The Chairman said that the AGM in 2018 would be held in the same location, the date and time to be announced. She closed the meeting at 3.32pm

Out and About Gardening
With Ken Tudgay

October-November-December A check list

October. As soon as we get to October reality sets in. Did we have a good year? Some people said that the runner beans curled up but lasted a long time. Carrots were good but onions went over quickly. They should be hung up and stored and the shallots pickled in malt vinegar and spice for Christmas. Potatoes should be dug up and stored in bags or sacks. Marrows should be hung up in tights and checked regularly. Sweet pea seeds should have been collected, and as soon as they are dry runner bean seeds. Now be prepared to take cuttings from delphiniums, asters perennial type.

Now is the time to sow sweet peas in clean pots or trays in good compost and put in the greenhouse or frames. Hardy annuals; once the plants have

been killed by frost, remove dead growth. Dahlias can be dug up after frost or left in the ground and covered up. With roses cut out old stems and clear the rubbish away. There will be digging to be done, but take it easy to start with if it is your first dig.

Clean the greenhouse out and wash it if required. Tidy up and wash pots. Look at seed catalogues to order seeds required and order potatoes. Make your plans for 2018. Don't forget you can try to grow onion sets and garlic cloves. Sow broad beans now either in pots or in the ground.

November. Spread compost over the ground as you dig or after digging. As the ground has to settle use planks to walk on. Plant new bare fruit trees, bushes and cane fruit. Prune apple and pear trees and soft fruit bushes. Keep digging when possible. If you wish, cover the ground with black polythene to keep the weeds down. Remove dead leaves from the ground or on sprouts, cabbages etc. Harvest your cauliflowers and cabbages as you need them. Pick the rest of your runner bean and French bean seeds and put them in paper bags, tins or jars. Mark them clearly. You can lift turnips to eat or store them in case of hard ground. Leeks are good now. Don't pull them up or you will cause damage. Use a fork. They make good leek and potato soup. Don't forget the pepper. Clear up in general. Turn the compost to keep the wild life away. Check your broad beans growing in pots or in the ground. Check your rhubarb sets. Either dig them up and put them in large pots or keep them weed free. Never plant rhubarb on the top of manure. When planted, put manure around the plant. You can prepare beds and keep hoeing.

Plant your blackcurrants. You could also try figs, raspberries, or red currants. You may have to re-stake apple trees and pear trees. Check your greenhouse often for mice and your potatoes and apples for bad ones. Sort your seeds on a bad day.

December. We are nearing the end of another year and it is difficult to know what to do now. We have gone through our catalogues and worked out how our year was. What grew well and what didn't. Please rotate your

crops. Plan what you are going to do and write down whose seed you used before and what you have left. Check the garden centres for special offers. Put your Christmas request for new tools, perhaps a hoe, some line or a spade! Your pots and trays need to be sorted over. Was the compost we used good enough? Join a garden club. A lot of horticultural clubs have useful talks and special offers.

I hope you have pruned your apple and pear trees. Check them for damage and also the frames for currant bushes. The outdoor broad beans in pots should be showing, also those in pots. Don't let them dry out but remember it's cold. If you have any carrots in the ground dig them up and store them. Check the Brussels sprouts. Take the bottom leaves off. Frosted sprouts are great with butter and pepper. Keep topping up your compost bins. Check all produce stored once again. Cover your beds with black polythene to suppress weeds. Check your broad bean plants for mice and rats. They like to dig up the beans.

Check your pear and apple trees for canker. Cut out the diseased wood.

Well now is the time to put your feet up and enjoy Christmas, but only one day as there is work to be done in January!.

Have a great Christmas and New Year. Here's to a good 2018 gardening

Ken



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Cycling for Health at Palmer Park Sports Stadium

Earlier this year CTC in partnership with Sport Reading started some outdoor cycling sessions around the track at Palmer Park stadium, providing the opportunity for individuals wanting to become fitter whilst enjoying the outdoor elements.

The sessions are suitable for any one who just wants to get fitter or lose some weight, but they also cater for individuals with more specific health problems such as diabetes, muscular sclerosis and heart conditions.

The session is on Mondays 11.30a.m. to 12.30p.m. It costs £2.50, which includes use of the bikes and tricycles. N.B. It may be necessary to share bikes when the sessions are busy.

Individuals with heart conditions please call Binders on 07900906056 before attending, as a G.P. referral will be necessary.

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