

Hearts and Minds

THE HERTBEATS NEWSLETTER



**St Albans and District Cardiac Support Group
Established 1997**

Affiliated to the British Heart Foundation and Arrhythmia Alliance

secretary@hertbeats.org.uk

[Website: www.hertbeats.org.uk](http://www.hertbeats.org.uk)



Christmas Dinner at The Stables

February/March 2017

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

21st February

Juliet Rogers

Associate Director Communications and Engagement
Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group
A talk on NHS matters locally

21st March

"Meet the Doctors"

Once again, our Vice Presidents, the consultant cardiologists from the West Herts Hospitals group, will be on hand to answer your questions and present the latest developments in cardiology.

18th April

St Albans Organ Theatre

Instead of a meeting at St Mary's, the committee has arranged an evening at The Organ Theatre.

16th May

AGM

20th June

Strawberry Evening

With Entertainment

18th July

Victor Geduld – The History of Photography

There will also be a photographic competition – details in the next issue of *Hearts and Minds*.

No Meeting in August

Please see Jim's article on Pages 6 and 7 for more details of the Doctors' Evening and the Organ Theatre visit, together with a report on the Christmas Party.

All Tuesday meetings (unless otherwise stated) will be held in the Hall of St Mary Marshalswick, Sherwood Avenue at **8.00** (Hall available from 7.45).

PUBLISHED BY HERTBEATS, a Cardiac Support Group formed in 1997 to provide practical advice, information and help to cardiac patients and their families within the St. Albans, Harpenden, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield areas. It is also an informal social group that arranges, for both patients and ex-patients, trips at home and abroad, regular friendly gatherings with interesting speakers and the opportunity to meet new and old friends. Whilst not offering formal medical advice, Hertbeats members often learn much about their ailments and the practical means of coping with these by talking to other members who have had similar experiences.

Opinions expressed in *Hearts and Minds* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editor nor of Hertbeats.

EDITORIAL

First, an apology for the late arrival of this issue on your doormat or computer screen. The reason is that I have just returned, somewhat jet-lagged and frozen stiff, from an unforgettable five weeks in Australia, including a magical tour of Tasmania. I am sure that you are really not interested in what I've been up to, but I thought I ought to explain the delay in publishing this issue of the newsletter.

Anyhow, I hope you find some interesting items in this issue. You might remember that, some months ago, I mentioned that I was aiming to set up a lunch/dining group and invited members to contact me if they were interested. We now have a group comprising about 30 members, some of whom can be seen tucking into their Christmas dinner on the cover of this newsletter. The meals are at The Stables Restaurant which is on the Oaklands College St Albans campus in Hatfield Road, and are prepared and served by the students. Dinners are normally on the first Thursday and lunches on the third Wednesday of the month, although there are some special "themed" dinners as well. The punch line is that you get a three course gourmet meal, beautifully cooked and efficiently served, for under £20, including a glass of wine or beer. Initially, I named the group the Hertbeats Luncheon Club, but I think that "luncheon" sounds a bit portentous and "club" a bit exclusive. Anyway, there are almost as many members attending the dinners as there are the lunches. So I have changed the name to Hertbeats Dining Group. After all, when I was a kid, I didn't have lunch, let alone luncheon; like the Ronnie Corbett character, I "went home to dinner". If you would like to join the group, please let me know and I will add you to the list.

John Coad

NEWS FROM THE CHAIR

Looking back for a moment on 2016 it, was not my own favourite year. I had four different stays in hospital. One of these was due to a sudden cardiac problem, and I know that several other Hertbeats' members had similar (and ongoing) 'events' last year. On other big 'events' affecting us all are the uncertainties of political changes at home and in the USA continuing into this year.

However, on a much brighter note, Hertbeats had another very successful year. We were helped of course by the £1000 grant from the St Albans Community Fund. Our meetings and trips were successful, as was the Christmas 'do'. I am, though, acutely aware of all of the hard work put into this by the organisers and helpers, led by Jim Green and Brian Gibson. We have plenty of time now to plan for next Christmas. Should we have another

'DIY' event, or pay for others at least to help? Ideas have suggested outside caterers (as we once had a few years ago). How much is a reasonable cost to ask members to pay? Might it be better to have a New Year's event instead (given so much takes place just before Christmas)? Views please to Jim Green, me, or any member of the Committee. (Contact details on the back page.)

Well before next winter of course we have the 20th anniversary of Hertbeats celebration at Hatfield House on 8 June. I didn't arrange that date, but it happens to be my birthday! Jim and Michael Utteridge have put all the hard work into arranging this. Indefatigable as ever, Jim additionally continues to come up with interesting speakers for our Group meetings and, as an innovation, has arranged for us to visit the Organ Theatre in April.

I am always conscious of the work put in by our Committee members and some others. Without them Hertbeats events would not happen. We are a voluntary organisation and have to arrange everything ourselves. If you could volunteer for any assistance, however small, such as helping with refreshments, or other members on trips, or lifts to meetings, please let me or any member of the Committee know.

At the Christmas party we were introduced to the HERTBEATS LIGHT PEN. The reaction from those attending was very enthusiastic and many were sold. The pen is being used for publicity in addition to Patient Identity cards and business cards. Our website address is prominently displayed and gives the recipient the opportunity of finding out about our activities in greater detail. It is suggested that members could spread the word by giving out these promotional AIDS to anyone who they think could benefit from further Hertbeats information. Doctors, hospital and surgery contacts in general would seem to be prime candidates, but anyone who can be an ambassador for Hertbeats should be a recipient. Word of mouth has always been the best means of publicity and now we have professional tools so please use them. Please contact Brian Gibson for repeat supplies"

As usual Michael has put together a fascinating array of trips for 2017 and details are elsewhere in this Newsletter.

At the beginning of this 'News from the Chair' I referred to illness. We are a 'Support Group' and, if you know of any member who is ill, or in hospital, please let Ann Gibson know as she looks after Hertbeats' 'Care and Welfare'. (Contact number on back page.)

Usually I give any exercise news in the 'Exercises Classes Update' in each Newsletter edition. However, given the current focus on preventative measures we could all try to take to avoid illnesses, especially serious ones, your Committee wants to emphasise that the seven exercise classes run by Hertbeats each week are there for everyone. They are not gym sessions and everyone goes at his/her own pace. This is particularly the case of the sessions in the Hospital Maple Unit Physiotherapy Gym. Our 'physios' are all

trained professionals who put your well-being as the priority. Additionally we want to fill these Maple Unit classes, as due to the high rent charged by the NHS (it needs the cash!), currently these classes are running at a loss to Hertbeats.

Finally please do not forget the meeting with the cardiologists in March (when I hope to meet one of them outside the hospital setting where he looked after me in 2016!).

Brian York

SECRETARY REPORT

Current Membership. As at 9th January 2017, Hertbeats membership stands at 363. We have gained 22 new members since 1 July. Whilst I have been away I have been advised of three further enquiries who will hopefully join our ranks.

New Members. Since the last newsletter Angela Qusted, Patricia Faulkner and Patricia Wilson have joined Hertbeats – Welcome aboard.

Age Statistics. Several times now the committee has discussed topics where knowledge of the age range of Hertbeats members would have been useful. On the renewal form this year I will add an “optional” field for you all to put your age if you don’t mind.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Training All the CPR courses laid on by Jean Sharpe were well attended. Everyone has been impressed by the thoroughness of the training. We were all made more aware of how desperately urgent it is to provide CPR where someone has stopped breathing. **Perhaps particularly so for partners and for Hertbeats activity leaders.** As well as being “refreshed” even those of us who had been on CPR courses before learned something new, not least that CPR has been simplified.

Jean Sharpe has now arranged two further CPR courses. These will take place at St Albans Community Fire Station. (The given address of 153 London Road seems to be misleading. However as you come out of Drakes Drive turn left onto London Road and the fire station is on the left in about 176 yards and is well sign posted.) If you and/or your partner wish to join a course, please complete the CPR request form enclosed with this newsletter. A Training Request form can also be found under “Helpful Notices and Posters” on our web site.

Roger Miller

MORE ON EVENTS PAST AND FUTURE

Christmas Buffet and Entertainment Evening

On the 14th December, over 80 members sat down to a buffet and were entertained by a jazz group called the Jolly Jazzers. A good time was had by all and everybody seemed to enjoy the buffet.

Afterwards the Jolly Jazzers entertained us with foot tapping numbers and tunes that took us back to our youth. We had an extra surprise when our treasurer Dave Tarrant and his wife Frances gave us a dancing exhibition of rock’n’roll. Will we see them on “Strictly” I ask myself?

The Jolly Jazzers give their time free and support a very special charity, St Francis Hospice in Berkhamstead. I am pleased to tell you we raised £202.00 for them. Mike Pack, the leader of the Jolly Jazzers, was delighted and asked me to thank everybody for their generosity.

Doctors’ Evening 21st March 2017

Once again, Hertbeats members are very fortunate that our Vice Presidents, Doctors Khan, Keenan and Moore, consultant cardiologists from the West Herts Hospitals Group, have agreed to come along and talk to us about the latest developments in cardiology.

This meeting generates the largest attendance of the year for our meetings, and I am sure this year it will be well supported.

The meeting gives members a wonderful opportunity to question the doctors on cardiology procedures (personal questions should not be asked) or you may want to know the future progress for our local hospitals. There may be other concerns you have about the NHS.

To give the doctors time to prepare their answers I would ask you to send me in writing or email your questions and I will pass them on to the doctors.

W.J. Green, 10 Cromwell Close, St Albans, AL4 9YE

E-mail jamesgreen.6@hotmail.co.uk

An Evening at the Organ Theatre – 18th April 2017

Your committee has arranged an evening at the Organ Theatre.

Instead of meeting at St Mary’s Church we will meet at **8pm** at the Organ Theatre.

**320 Camp Road
St Albans
AL1 5PK**

There should be adequate parking, some at the museum and some nearby road parking. All costs will be met by Hertbeats so it is free entry for members.



The presentation will last about 90 minutes and normally they play and describe all the instruments. There is no walking involved and everything is on one level. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided.

St Albans Organ Theatre is run entirely by volunteers. Originally, the Collection was owned by Charles Hart who, towards the end of his life, wished the Collection to still be available to the public. To this end a Charitable Trust was set up under Mr. Hart's supervision to administer the Collection and to continue what he had started in the early 1960s.

The Organ Theatre will need to know how many people are coming to the performance. At this time only Hertbeats members will be invited.

To book your seats please contact me by e-mail: jamesgreen.6@hotmail.co.uk or ring **01727 830191**.

James Green

EXERCISE CLASSES – UPDATES

MAPLE UNIT

As I stated towards the beginning of this Newsletter edition, Hertbeats can play an important, even if small part, in the national and NHS campaigns for healthy lifestyles, and especially the opportunities we provide for exercise. Whether you do it in a Hertbeats class and/or on our walks or golf, or elsewhere, the important thing is, for all who can, to exercise regularly. Currently there are vacancies for all classes at 6.00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please do let me know if you would like to join a Maple Unit class, whether you have recently completed 'rehab', or would like to start exercising anyway. If the latter, you will need a note from your GP confirming basic fitness to exercise. (Contact details on the back page.)

All exercisers go at their own pace, supervised by an appropriately qualified physiotherapist, namely Elaine, Sarah, Catherine or Debbie, and for the Thursday classes by Eleanor, who some will know if they have passed through 'rehab' at the City hospital.

Brian York

ANTONELLA McMILLIN'S EXERCISE CLASSES

All members are welcome at Antonella's classes.

The Hertbeats class at Westminster Lodge on Mondays at 2.30pm is now being taken by Antonella.

The full list of Antonella's other classes is:

Group classes:

Batchwood Tuesday 11.30am – **need more members to attend!**

London Colney Wednesday 11 am

Harpenden Wednesday 1pm

Gym classes:

Harpenden Monday 12.20 to 13.50 + Friday 12.30 to 14.00

Westminster Lodge Thursday 10.30 to 12.00

WESTMINSTER LODGE EXERCISE CLASS

Monday 2.30 to 3.30 @ £3.30 per session held in Dance Studio 2

(Note free parking for the first two hours but you must display a ticket on your windscreen)

Numbers for the last 8 weeks to 19 December 2016

Highest 17, lowest 8, averaged at 12.

If any member is interested in joining our happy friendly class please contact me for a chat on 01727 852610 or email (note new)

cjh@stalbansherts.myzen.co.uk.

Christine Hill

BATCHWOOD

Tuesday 11.30 – PLEASE TAKE NOTE - THIS COULD BE IN DANGER OF CLOSING UNLESS MORE MEMBERS ATTEND!!! (REQUIRED RUNNING AVERAGE NEEDED IS A MINIMUM OF 12 PER WEEK).

Gareth Huxtable

JERSEY FARM

The JFCC exercise group is back in full swing after the Christmas break. For those of you who are currently not part of our group but are thinking of joining us for some exercise and fun, we meet for an hour at 6pm on Tuesdays at the JFCC in St Brelades Place AL4 9RG, where we are loosely controlled by Jacquie, a very experienced instructor who's been with us for many years. We undertake a variety of exercises, mainly aerobic and waving weights around. The hall we use is very large and we have plenty of room for more members. Each session costs £4 on the night, there's free off-road parking, and we're only twenty yards from Tesco and the pub should you want to make a night of it. If you are interested and want to find out more, give me a ring: the number's on the back page.

Tony Day

HERTBEATS WALKS

We have a regular group of walkers for either the 3-mile walk or the 5-mile walk, with some members coming along to both walks.

The 3-mile walk usually takes 1.5hrs, so not too fast, and the 5-mile walk about 2 hrs, so a little faster.

If you feel you would like to join us then please contact me using one of the following:

Tel: 01727 850165 Mob: 07745 295691 Email: etnajones@gmail.com and I will add you to the mailing list.

The proposed a list of dates for the 3-mile and 5-mile walks for the period February-April 2017 are:

3-mile walks Wednesdays – 10.30am

15th February
15th March
5th April

5-mile walks Thursdays – 10am

no 5-mile walk in Feb.
23rd March
20th April

These dates could be subject to change, especially if the weather is bad or it's too muddy, but obviously I will let you know!
Please contact me if you have any questions.
I hope to see as many of you as possible so please put these dates in your diaries.

Ed Jones

HERTFORDSHIRE HEALTH WALKS

A note from Hertfordshire Health Walks outlines the free, regular and volunteer-led walks offered across Hertfordshire. Co-ordinated by HCC's Countryside Management Service, over 60 walks take place each week. The shortest walks are 20-30minutes [A] on flat and even ground. Longer walks take up to 90 minutes [C]. The note says that many of the walkers and volunteers have found the walks beneficial for managing weight and lowering blood pressure, as well as meeting new people and improving mental well-being.

The brochures are available from Doctors' surgeries as well as Information Points at St Albans District Council and Harpenden Council offices. Online information is at www.hertfordshirehealthwalks.org, or telephone 01992 588433. If you are a twitterer try: twitter.com/hertshealthwalk. Here are some of the walks listed in our immediate area:

Highfield Park: Charters Health Club car park, Hill End Lane [Opposite Spar]. AL4 0DB: Walks twice a week: Every Monday 9.30am, or every Tuesday at 1.30pm: About 60 minutes [B]. Local transport and refreshments available.

Hatching Green: Redbourn Lane, Harpenden AL5 2JP: Parking on side road: Every Thursday at 10.30am. About 90 minutes with slopes [C]. Local transport with refreshments nearby.

Greenwood Park: Meet at Greenwood Park Community Centre, Tippendell Lane, Chiswell Green, AL2 3HW. Every Friday at 2pm: About 60 minutes [B].

If it is your first walk get a reference number from the website or turn up 10 minutes early to see the group leader. Good shoes or boots are needed, plus wet-weather clothing, in case. It is recommended one carries a bottle of water.

John Versey

OUT AND ABOUT - TRAVEL

2017 PROGRAMME OF OUTINGS

Since the last Newsletter, details of three Outings - Guildhall and All Hallows, Westminster Abbey and Lambeth Palace and "Mamma Mia" - have been sent out to everyone on the mailing list.

At the time of writing all the places on the Westminster Abbey and Lambeth Palace outing have been taken but there are still places available on the others. Details of these are shown below:-

The Guildhall and All Hallows by the Tower Thursday 9th March



Our day in The City involves a Guided Tour of the Guildhall with the opportunity to witness a session of the Court of Common Council.



Afterwards we travel to Tower Hill for a Lunch break before a short guided tour of All Hallows Church which has connections with many historical figures.

The cost of the outing is £15 per person which covers the cost of the Coach, Guides and Driver's Gratuity.

The Coach leaves Marshalswick at 09.00 a.m. and Chiswell Green at 09.15 a.m. and is scheduled to leave Tower Hill at 4 p.m.

"Mamma Mia" at Milton Keynes Theatre – Wednesday 10th May



The story-telling magic of Abba's timeless songs propels this enchanting tale of love, laughter and friendship to the ultimate feel-good show. On the eve of her wedding, a daughter's quest to discover the identity of her father brings three men from her mother's past back to the island they last visited 20 years earlier. We have Stall Seats for the Matinee performance at 2.30 p.m. at the Milton Keynes Theatre.

The cost of the outing is £30 per person which covers the cost of the Coach, Theatre Ticket and Driver's Gratuity. Please note that we have to pay for the Theatre Tickets by 16th March 2017 which is the latest date for receipt on any Booking Forms.

The Coach will leave Marshalswick at 11.00 a.m. and Chiswell Green at 11.15 a.m.

If you are interested in joining us on any of these outings please contact me using the contact details on the back cover of the Newsletter.

Michael Utteridge

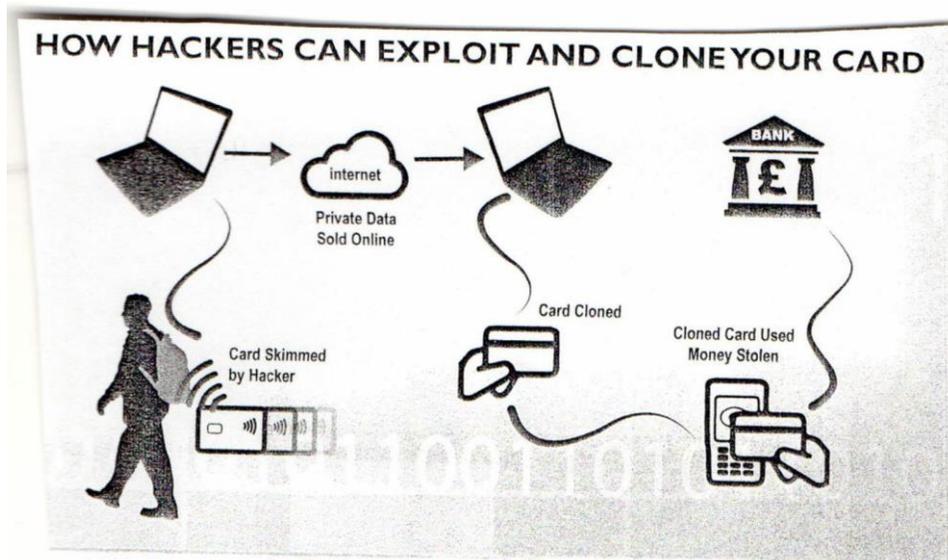
CONTACTLESS CARDS

At the November Meeting we had a talk by Christopher Stokes, a local Police Community Support Officer. One of the items in his talk was the problem of having contactless debit and credit cards. When present cards reach their expiry date, the new card sent out by the bank will likely have the sign on it shown in the first diagram. Quite often the bank doesn't tell you it's the new type!



This is the sign that if you want to pay quickly, without entering your PIN, you can tap the card on the payment machine and the amount, up to £30, will be deducted from your card or account immediately. If you have an Oyster card you will find the sign there, so to pay a bus or tube fare again you just need to tap.

The problem is that the cards can be cloned or skimmed. That is, someone with an easily available device can walk past you and can pick up the signal from your card and can skim £30 a time. For the card to be cloned, all the skimmer has to do is to download the details of the card picked up by the device and, using a computer program, sell the details over the Internet where a new card can have the details entered. This method is shown in the second diagram.



Before and since Christmas I have heard of three people who have been skimmed or had a stolen card used by the thief! So, what can one do? First, you could ask your bank to change the card to an ordinary debit or credit card without the embedded technology - no sign on the front. If they won't do this, though my bank did issue me with a new old-type debit card, get hold of a card guard. This can be another card which blocks the signals and is kept in your wallet or handbag with your cards. Another way is to buy an RFID wallet or purse. These are made of a material which again stops any skimming or cloning. At the meeting, PCSO Stokes handed out small RFID covers for cards provided by St Albans Council. Ask at the Council Offices if they are still being issued. There is one other danger. If you have a new passport it will have all your details electronically embedded - it's called a biometric passport. These details can be cloned easily so the advice is never leave your passport with the hotel front desk! Remember, this can also happen to a debit or credit card in a restaurant if taken away from the table. So, beware.

John Versey

TRAVEL INSURANCE WITH PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

I am in the process of updating the Travel Insurance Companies list. Should anyone want a copy please contact me on 01727 838193 or email me at jayms500@gmail.com and I would be pleased to send you a copy

Jean Sharpe

And (almost) finally,

We have a glimpse of what our Exercise Classes really get up to!



Harpenden Wednesday Class



London Colney Class

MY FAVOURITE THINGS

Those of you who remember a young Julie Andrews sing this song might reflect on how time flies – she is now in her eighties! To commemorate her birthday a few years ago, she made a special appearance at the Manhattan Radio City Music Hall, where she sang the following updated version of the song.

Try singing it yourself.

*Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Cadillacs and cataracts, hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favourite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.*

*Hot tea and crumpets and corn pad for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favourite things.*

*When the joints ache, When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.*

[Thanks to Roger for providing this piece]

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS – 2016/2017

HONORARY OFFICERS

LIFE PRESIDENT	Brian Gibson	01727 859127
LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS	Dr John Bayliss Dr John Versey	01582 764852
VICE PRESIDENTS	Dr Masood Khan Dr Philip Moore Dr Niall Keenan	

OFFICERS

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TRAVEL INSURANCE COLLATOR	Jean Sharpe (Co-opted)	01727 838193
AND...	June Gibbs Gareth Huxtable	01582 763526 01582 768004

EXERCISE CO-ORDINATORS

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WESTMINSTER LODGE	Brian York	01727 854072
HARPENDEN & BATCHWOOD	Christine Hill	01727 852610
JERSEY FARM	Antonella McMillin Tony Day	01582 715615 01727 866751

OTHER ACTIVITIES

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RECOMMENDED TRADERS	Maureen Negus	01727 850539
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Please send contributions for the next issue to me by **15th March at the latest** – if possible as **Word** or **Excel** attachments rather than embedded in emails. Thank you.