

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)



Honfleur in Normandy

June/July 2017

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

20th June

Strawberry Evening

With Entertainment by The Jolly Jazzers

18th July

Victor Geduld

Photography – some history
and the adventures and humour of a hobby

No Meeting in August

19th September

Jim Crompton

A talk on Osteopathy

17th October

Di Stevens

A talk on "Remap"

21st November

Police Sergeant Martin Proctor (Rtd)

With Labrador Dylan

The Work of an Explosives Search Dog

No Meeting in December

See "News from The Chair"

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).

COVER PICTURE

This delightful port was the base for an unforgettable visit by Hertbeats members in September 2008. The tour included emotional visits to war graves, the D-Day landing grounds and Mulberry Harbours; also, on a lighter note, a trip to Monet's Garden.

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 a variety of outings, exercise classes, regular friendly gatherings with interesting speakers and the opportunity to meet new and old friends. Hertbeats does not offer formal medical advice, but members often learn much about their ailments, and the practical means of coping with them, by talking to other members who have had similar experiences.

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

So, another Annual General Meeting has come and gone and we have a new committee to look after us. Wait a minute! It's the same committee as before (except that Jean Sharpe is now a full member instead of being co-opted). Still, none the worse for that. I think you'll agree that our committee members have done a fine job on all fronts. I won't dwell on this, as the annual report from our chairman, Brian York, will appear in the next newsletter. For the forty or so members who attended the AGM, this might seem a bit repetitive, but for the almost 90% of members who didn't attend for one reason or another, I hope you will look forward to reading about the wide range of activities available, if you weren't aware of them already.

We've seen the decision to close the two palliative wards at SACH. I have heard rumours of further cutbacks while the Herts Valleys CCG thrashes around looking for ways to save money. Then there have been problems with "Concordia". The concept of a "market" in the NHS is, at last, being shown for what it is – a sham. Whichever party you support on the 8th June and whoever becomes your MP, please lobby him or her to press for, at least, a halt to the cuts and, preferably, an enhancement of local NHS services.

John Coad
Editor

NEWS FROM THE CHAIR

Just looking back first of all. The trip to the Organ Theatre in April was a change from our usual monthly meetings, but very enjoyable (including the singing of 'Daisy, Daisy' and 'Tipperary' along with the music). Thanks to Jim and Doris Green for their organisation.

We have also had our AGM in May. Thank you for once again electing hard-working members on to the Committee. These are the people who enable Hertbeats' activities to take place. At the meeting we were also presented with a cheque for £300 from the Provincial Masonic Grand Lodge as one of their charitable donations.

Now, looking forward, about 100 members will be sitting down to lunch on 8 June in the splendid Hatfield House to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Hertbeats. One of the key founding members, and now our Life-President, Brian Gibson, will no doubt wish to recall some of the highlights from 1997 to the present. Many thanks again to Jim and to Michael Utteridge for making all of the arrangements. Not long afterwards we will be holding our 'Strawberry Evening' on 20 June.

Further into the future, your Committee has decided that, as so many other things take place in December, it would be better to have an event in the New Year, in the 'quieter month' of January. Please watch this space for detailed news on this to come later this year.

Gareth Huxtable, together with Brian Gibson, has been working hard on publicising Hertbeats, especially with the NHS and medical professionals.

One important event was a 'pop-up' session on Hertbeats at the Elms Surgery in Harpenden.

Not such good news on the local NHS has been the closure of 39 community beds in St Albans hospital. Moreover two 'privatised' services, Concordia (which, you may recall, gave a presentation to one of our meetings) and the patients' ambulant/transport service, have experienced difficulties affecting patients including some of our own members.

There have been issues about some of the exercise classes. The good news is that all current Hertbeats classes, including those at Westminster Lodge and Harpenden, will continue as now. The bad news is that the Council/1Life, no doubt due to austerity measures/'business case', is ending some of its own exercise and gym classes at Batchwood and in Harpenden. These classes were taken by Antonella McMillin and were attended by some Hertbeats' members. Hopefully, due to pressure from Hertbeats, the class in London Colney may be saved.

Brian York

SECRETARY REPORT

Current Membership. As at 12th May 2017, Hertbeats membership stands at 378. We have gained 55 new members since the 1st April 2016.

Membership Renewals. The Hertbeats financial year starts 1st April. Within this copy of the newsletter those whose £7.50 has not yet been received will find a reminder renewal slip. Sorry if your renewal fee has been paid and crossed in the post. So far I have 80 renewals outstanding which is more than last year at this stage. So please remit your fees as soon as you can. Non payers will be removed from the database within the next few weeks. Please remember to tick all the "interest" boxes and date of birth. So far I have been given the DoB for 272 members with only 10 declining to do so. When the renewals are complete I will let you know the outcome.

New Members. Since the last newsletter Rafina Suffee, Jean Addison, June Peters, Sara Smith, Margaret Rolfe, Chris O'Brien, Eileen Lee, Peter Church and Keith Eaton have joined Hertbeats – Welcome aboard.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Training. There is one CPR course left in the current series. I suggest that these courses are of **particular value to partners and to activity leaders**. Even if you are not fit enough to carry out CPR yourself, the knowledge gained on the course would allow you to tell others what to do should you be on scene.

This last course in this series will take place at **St Albans Community Fire Station on Thursday 25th May from 2.00 to 4.00pm.**

(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 this course, please contact **Jean Sharpe at 1 Birklands Park, London Road, St Albans, AL1 1TS, phone 01727 838193 or Email jeanmarys@aol.com straightaway** (assuming that you receive this newsletter in time).

Roger Miller

HERTBEATS WALKING GROUP

The walking group continues to thrive. The very first walk organised by Ed Jones took place 3rd September 2014. The picture below shows the first of Ed's Hertbeats walkers.



The latest three mile walk took place on a lovely sunny day that was pleasantly cool and without the forecast rain. We were a little under strength as the Hertbeats trip to *Mama Mia* took place on the same day. Still, we had a really nice chatty time on the only walk to be repeated since the start 33 months before. The photo overleaf was taken at the same point in the walk as the first photo. Thanks for the walks Ed and for the time you put into reconnaissance and preparation.



I thought you might like to see one of my birthday presents. Whilst it rather reflects days long gone it does encompass the spirit of the Hertbeats Walking Group.



Everything is in walking distance if you have the time!

Roger Miller

EXERCISE CLASSES – UPDATES

MAPLE UNIT

Currently we still have vacancies for all classes at 6.00 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and also for the Thursday 7.15 pm class. 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/instructor, Elaine, Sarah, Catherine, Debbie - and for the Thursday classes by Eleanor, who some will know if they have passed through 'rehab' at the City hospital.

Brian York

WESTMINSTER LODGE

Monday 2.30 to 3.30, £3.40 (increased by 10p!) per session held in Dance Studio 2
(Note free parking for the first two hours but you must display a ticket on windscreen)

Numbers for the last 6 weeks to 1st May 2017. (2 Bank Holidays no class) - Highest 15, lowest 10, 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 cjh@stalbansherts.myzen.co.uk.

Christine Hill

ANTONELLA McMILLIN'S CLASSES

All members are welcome at Antonella's classes.

The Hertbeats classes at Westminster Lodge on Mondays at 2.30 pm and at the Harpenden Leisure Centre on Wednesdays at 1.00 pm.

Antonella's other classes include that at London Colney on Wednesdays at 11.00.

Unfortunately this list is not as long as previously due to closure/changes imposed by the Council/1Life.

JERSEY FARM

Judging from the average attendance at the JFCC exercise group, it appears that the class remains very popular. New members continue to join and come most weeks, and most of the rest of us have been exercising for many years, so we must be doing something right. 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 Jersey Farm Community Centre 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

HERTFORDSHIRE HEALTH WALKS

The brochure 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 20-30 minutes [A] on flat and even ground. Longer walks take up to 90 minutes [C]. Health Walks are an ideal way of taking exercise. The brochure notes they are suitable for all ages and abilities; they are local, short and free. Other points are they are social, you meet people and all walks are led by trained volunteers.

The brochures are available from Doctors' surgeries as well as Information Points at St Albans District Council and Harpenden Town Council offices. Online information is at 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:

Redbourn: Meet at Cricket Club car park, Redbourn AL3 7DB: every Tuesday at 10.30am. These are noted as First Steps - an easy walk, 20-30 minutes [A]. A gentle pace, no stiles, with regular stopping places.

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.

Nomansland Common and Heartwood Forest: Meet at Ferrers Lane car park, near Wheathampstead, nearest postcode is AL4 8EJ. Every Thursday at 10.30am. Moderate plus: over an hour, with inclines and stiles. [C+]

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 web-site or turn up 10 minutes early to see the group leader. Good shoes or boots needed, plus wet-weather clothing, in case. It is recommended one carries a bottle of water.

Harpenden Common Walk

An annual event is a guided walk around Harpenden Common with a talk about its upkeep and history. This year it will be on Tuesday 20th June, 6pm for 6.30-8.00pm. Meet at Harpenden Common Golf Club car park, Cravells Road, AL5 1BL.

John Versey

NHS NEWS

SUSPENSION OF CARDIAC SERVICES

In past issues of our newsletter we have reported on the commissioning of a private company, Concordia, to provide cardiac services, including echo cardiograms and 24-hour ECG monitoring. The services are based in four locations in West Hertfordshire, one of which is The Maltings in St Albans. A member of Concordia spoke at a Hertbeats meeting last July.

The service ran successfully for several months, but was suspended by the Herts Valleys Clinical Commission Group in April and May for failing to meet its contract obligations; for example, not offering patients a date for their diagnostic test within 5 days of receipt of a referral.

The company has now satisfied the CCG that it can meet these conditions and is due to start up again on June 1st.

During the suspension period, patients have been transferred to West Herts Hospital Trust hospitals. As 650 patients have been transferred, it will take some time to eliminate the backlog.

PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW NON-EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE

There are two types of ambulance service. One provides transport for acute and A&E patients (which are known as blue-light ambulances) and the other is mainly concerned with driving patients to and from their hospital appointments, which I will call non-urgent ambulances. The Herts Valleys

Clinical Commissioning Group is responsible for commissioning and paying for both of these

Recently the contract for providing the non-urgent ambulances has changed to Private Ambulance Service Ltd and problems have arisen. There have been major delays (in some cases up to several hours) in taking people home and long delays in answering the telephone. We have informed the CCG of some cases we have known about and our comments have been valued. The BBC has also run reports on television and radio about what has been happening.

Private Ambulance Service Ltd started out in 2012 as a small self-financed family run company with 8 vehicles. It now has over 200, providing services nationwide to NHS trusts and organisers of public and private events.

In the last twelve months it has secured contracts with Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire CCGs, the London North West Hospital Trust (including Northwick Park, Central Middlesex and Ealing) as well as the Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals.

Our Clinical Commissioning Group is obviously very concerned about these reports and is working with the company to improve the situation.

John Blandford

OUT AND ABOUT - TRAVEL

Following the Hertbeats 20th Anniversary Lunch on 8th June our next outings are to Brighton in July and a "Cruise on the Ouse" with a visit to Kathy Brown's Garden in August. Full details are below:-

Hertbeats outing to Brighton - Wednesday, 19th July 2017 – for some ozone and a visit to a Royal pleasure palace.

Our July outing is to Brighton for a day by the sea with a visit to the Royal Pavilion. The exotic palace in the centre of Brighton was built as a seaside pleasure palace for George IV and mixes Regency splendour with the visual style of India and China.

The programme for our outing is to visit the Royal Pavilion in the morning, using an Audio Guided tour, and then spend the rest of the day at leisure enjoying the sea air, visiting the Pier, browsing the antique shops in The Lanes or all the other attractions that Brighton has to offer.



The cost of the outing is £26 per person including the Coach, Driver's Gratuity and tickets for the Royal Pavilion and the Audio Guide.

Pick up times will be 08.30 a.m. from The Ridgeway, Marshalswick and 08.45 a.m. from the Three Hammers, Chiswell Green. The Coach will have a Toilet and, if necessary, we can make a stop en route for a comfort break. **Places are going fast, so if you would like to join us please contact me on the Mobile number or email address on the back page of the Newsletter.**

Hertbeats "Cruise on the Ouse" and Tea with Kathy Brown in her Gardens - Wednesday, 23rd August 2017

Our August outing takes us on a cruise of the River Ouse on the "John Bunyan" followed by a visit to Kathy Brown's Gardens in Stevington.

We have chartered the "John Bunyan" for a three hour cruise from Bedford in the morning. The boat and its experienced crew has taken over 22,000 passengers on these cruises and is fully equipped with an access lift and Disabled Toilet. During the cruise a Ploughman's Lunch will be served and Drinks can be purchased from the Bar.

After a short journey to Stevington we meet up with Kathy Brown and her husband for a guided tour of their Gardens which includes Tea and Cake baked by Kathy. The Gardens cover four and a half acres and August highlights are the naturalistic borders, the 100 varieties of late Clematis and the edible flower garden.

The cost of the outing including the Coach, Driver's Gratuity, River Cruise with Lunch and Entrance to the Gardens with Tea and Cake is £34 per person.

Pick up times will be 08.30 a.m. from The Ridgeway, Marshalswick and 08.45 a.m. from the Three Hammers at Chiswell Green. Please note that the Coach will have a Toilet. **This trip is now fully booked, but if you would like to be put on the reserve list please contact me using the Mobile number on the back page of the Newsletter or the email address shown.**

Michael Utteridge



A Visit to Westminster Abbey & Lambeth Palace – April 6th 2017

49 Hertbeats members visited Westminster Abbey and Lambeth Palace on a sunny morning a few weeks ago. As it was half-term for many schools, the roads were not very busy; in fact we arrived in London too early. John, our efficient coach driver, gave us a short tour of some of the London sights, before taking us on to Westminster Abbey.

Westminster Abbey is the "Collegiate Church of St Peter at Westminster". It has been a Royal Peculiar since 1560, which means that it is under the personal jurisdiction of the sovereign.

This is a wonderful building. Much of it was built by Henry III in the Gothic style, but the building was started in 1245. All monarchs since William the Conqueror have been crowned in this Abbey, apart from Edward V, who was murdered in the Tower of London, and Edward VIII, who abdicated and so they were never crowned. 17 monarchs are interred and 3300 other people are either buried or commemorated in the Abbey.

It is very moving to see the tomb of the Unknown Warrior surrounded by poppies. I was very interested to see the Coronation Chair the oldest dated piece of English furniture made by a known artist. Edward I had this chair made and his son Edward II was the first monarch to be crowned in it. He became King in 1307.

The most sacred part of the Abbey is the shrine of St Edward the Confessor's Tomb. Poets' Corner is also interesting: there are so many famous names to be seen and remembered.

The abbey is so popular that it does get very crowded and often patience is needed to see some parts of the building.

At 1.50pm we were off to Lambeth Palace, about a 10 minute's coach ride away. But as we were passing the Palace of Westminster, we encountered a traffic jam of London taxis whose drivers were protesting against Uber taxis, and there we sat for one and a half hours. I did speak to a couple of policemen and asked why they could not move the taxis on, but they said the drivers had the right to protest. I was having calls to and from Lambeth Palace about our problems but we could not move. Eventually, at 3.25pm, we were able to continue our short journey to Lambeth Palace.

Lambeth Palace

We arrived at Lambeth Palace still in good humour and were met by Tricia Shannon, the Events & Tour Manager, and her volunteers. I was quite expecting her to say the tour was cancelled as we were so late, but we were taken into a wonderful garden. The sun was shining and we were given cold drinks and biscuits before the tour of the building began. Lambeth Palace garden covers 9 acres. Some of it was redesigned by Rosalind Runcie, wife of Archbishop Robert Runcie, the former bishop of St Albans. It is said to be the oldest and the third biggest garden in London.

Tricia and her volunteers said they would stay on to give us our tour round the Palace, and coach driver John was happy to delay our departure.

We were divided up into two groups. Only Hertbeats members were in the Palace, so it was nice to go round with no crowds and be able to concentrate on the talk, see the rooms and ask questions.

The Palace has been the residence of the Archbishops for 800 years. Prior to this, they lived at Canterbury, but they wanted to be near the monarch, so they moved to this site on the South Bank to be near the Royal Palace of Westminster.

The oldest part of the building is Archbishop Stephen Langton's Chapel and the crypt beneath. He was the first Archbishop to live at Lambeth Palace back in the 13th century.

The Great Hall was ransacked by Cromwell's men but Archbishop Juxon had it rebuilt in 1667.

There are portraits of many Archbishops painted by famous artists such as Hans Holbein, William Hogarth, Anthony van Dyck and Joshua Reynolds.

In the nineteenth century, the Architect Edward Blore renovated the Palace and added to it. He was the man who also renovated Buckingham Palace.

The Library is world famous and it is hoped to build a new one in the grounds. Academics from all over the world come here to study.

We left the Palace after thanking Tricia and her volunteers for an excellent visit. Some members said they enjoyed Lambeth Palace more than Westminster Abbey.

Can I also thank all the members on the trip for their patience and good humour during the long delay caused by the London taxi drivers' demonstration. Christine Hill summed it up in an email to me by saying what an enjoyable day we had, especially the entertainment put on for 90 minutes admiring a row of taxis!!!!

James Green

STRAWBERRY EVENING 2017

We will again be holding our Strawberry Evening in St Mary's Church Hall Marshalswick on the 20th June.

After we have feasted on strawberries and cream and a drink of something, we will be entertained by The Jolly Jazzers. Their style of music has proved to be very popular and the committee believes that many of our members will want to attend the event and we may have to restrict numbers.

We would like an idea of numbers to help us with the catering and seating. To book your place please contact James Green.

Telephone 01727 830191 or email jamesgreen.6@hotmail.co.uk

HERTBEATS GOLF SOCIETY

We had our Spring meeting at Stockwood Park Golf on Centre on Thursday 4th May. We were blessed with a pleasant dry day. The competition was a Texas Scramble in teams of 3 and 4. The event was won by a team of John Burt's bandits. Mick Simms' team came second. Nearest the Pin was won by Amad Purtow. A late, but convivial lunch, followed by prize giving concluded the occasion.

Our golf numbers have recently declined and we are now in need of new players, of any standard. If you are at all interested in golf please contact Vernon Clough on 01582 713080 or atvclough@ntlworld.com

OWL

OWL is the online equivalent of Neighbourhood Watch and stands for Online Watch Link. In this region it is put online under the auspices of the Hertfordshire Constabulary and, if you are not a member, you can join by visiting www.owl.co.uk. Messages come to your email address.

OWL carries information about all manner of security aids for the public, as well as details of crimes committed, hints on deterrents and how to keep safe. A recent useful document to download was on 'Scams'. There are also messages detailing police 'surgeries' at various locations and also such things as bicycle postcode stamping and house inspections to give advice on protection.

About 'scams' in general. The basic rule is never say 'yes' to anyone phoning or doorstepping [Oh! Trouble is there's an election looming!]. Other than that, take care. A leaflet handed out by my bank gives good advice because of the prevalence of scam tactics. Investment scams, for example on shares and wines, are a problem at present. So, watch out; if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Spot the warning signs. Are you being contacted out of the blue? Are you promised tempting returns and told the investment is safe? Are you offered a prize – with a fee to pay to collect it? Are you being called repeatedly – what is known as a 'boiler-house' scam? Are you told the offer is only available for a limited time? These tactics are common with the fraudsters. Just hang up!

A common scam is for someone to phone saying that your bank account has been compromised. They will say you need to transfer your money to a new account. Watch it! A bank would never 'phone with such horrendous news. Another ruse is to say your credit card has been cloned and you need a new one and a courier will collect the old one, but of course they will need your PIN! Don't fall for it! A true story: a neighbour had a call from a bank about his account; it was certainly a scam – he didn't have an account with the bank quoted.

John Versey

And finally,

Some Corny Old Puns and Malapropisms

She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.

A rubber-band pistol was confiscated from an algebra class because it was a weapon of maths disruption.

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.

A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was arrested for littering.

Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.

A hole has been found in a naturists' camp wall. The police are looking into it.

Two hats were hanging on a hat stand in the hall. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.

A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab centre said: "Keep off the Grass".

If you jumped off a bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine.

A vulture carrying two dead racoons boards an aeroplane. The steward looks at him and says: 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'

Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says: "Dam!"

Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says: "I've lost my electron." The other says: "Are you sure?" The first replies: "Yes, I'm positive."

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS – 2016/2017

HONORARY OFFICERS

LIFE PRESIDENT	Brian Gibson	01727 859127
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VICE PRESIDENTS	Dr Masood Khan Dr Philip Moore Dr Niall Keenan	

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Please send contributions for the next issue to me by **15th July at the latest** – if possible as **Word** or **Excel** attachments rather than embedded in emails. Thank you.