

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



*A new cycling group gave a rare opportunity for Hertbeats group activities
Strictly keeping two metres apart!*

August / September 2020



Hertbeats needs volunteers to fill four key roles which have become vacant through retirement. Please consider volunteering to assist in running the club.

- Chairman - replacing Brian York. Starting May 2021
- Secretary & Membership - replacing Roger Miller. Starting May 2021
- Outings organiser – replacing Michael Utteridge
- Information and Publicity (post vacant)

To discuss the posts contact Brian York or those named above, contact details are on the back cover.

Contacts for when events resume

Venue	Contact	Telephone	Email
Harpenden Sports Centre	Antonella McMillin	01582 715615	antonellamcm@aol.com
Westminster Lodge	Christine Hill	01727 852610	cjh@stalbansherts.myzen.co.uk
Jersey Farm Cmnty. Centre	Roger Miller	01727 766278	secretary@hertbeats.org.uk
Maple Unit, City Hospital	Graham Imber	01727 834907	exercise@hertbeats.org.uk
Batchwood Sports Centre	Antonella McMillin	01582 715615	antonellamcm@aol.com
Cotlandswick Leisure Centre	Antonella McMillin	01582 715615	antonellamcm@aol.com

Others

Walking Group	Ed Jones	07745 295691	walks@hertbeats.org.uk
Golf Society	Vernon Clough	01582 713080	golf@hertbeats.org.uk
Cycling Group	Graham Imber	01727 839407	cycling@hertbeats.org.uk

Hertbeats After the Shutdown

Hertbeats members who participate in the various club activities would love to read about what is happening in the club post shutdown. Unfortunately, at the time of sending the newsletter to the printers, the situation is still unclear.

Graham Imber, committee member responsible for Exercise Classes at Maple Unit in St Albans Hospital, has clearly and concisely outlined the situation.

“Whilst it would be great to be able to announce exactly when and how our exercise classes can re-start, we are at the mercy of the host venues to announce their reopening dates.

However, even when we know the dates it will not mean that classes can restart immediately. We will need to assess the safety measures that have been put in place and whether they are appropriate for Hertbeats’ classes. Most gyms and fitness studios are likely to be initially concentrating on providing safety for individual exercisers rather than exercise groups.

Even when the venues reopen, it will be likely that many of our classes will not be able continue in their present form. Until we have all of the details we cannot start the assessment process and agree on how we address it.

Quite simply - we will not be restarting any exercise classes in the near future. Maple Unit is a special problem because it is too small to support our class sizes both safely and legally. We may now need to start assessing alternative venues but as virtually all potential alternatives have until now remained closed that has been impossible to do.”

Antonella’s Zoom Classes (see photo) and cycling group operate now. Before long the walking group and golf expect to resume. No outings nor talks sadly.



News from Chairman Brian York

Unfortunately, most of our activities remain suspended due to the pandemic. As soon as we can resume, announcements will be advised by email and posted on the Hertbeats website. However, a new cycling group is operating and some members are enjoying Antonella McMillin's online exercise classes.

We have had several members in hospital, though not, as far as I know, with COVID. If you know of any Hertbeats member who is unwell, please let Ann Gibson know, so she can contact them. Telephone 01727 859127 or email at briangibson276@gmail.com.

If you want a more light-hearted commentary on Corona, please see my article later in this Newsletter.

The pandemic situation has led to a loss of some 70 Hertbeats members who have not renewed their subscriptions for the current year. They won't be receiving this Newsletter, so please encourage anyone you know who may have left, to re-join. Anyone of course can look at our website which also contains an electronic version of recent Newsletters.

On a positive note we have a few members who would like to volunteer to join the Hertbeats Committee and, if you would also be able to volunteer, please let me know. Contact details are on the back page.

Dave Tarrant has finally been able to retire as Treasurer and been replaced by Rowena D'Rosario. Once again thanks to Dave for such a superb job over so many years and a big welcome to Rowena, see the article about her later in this Newsletter.

This year is the last year of our Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF) grant of £1,000. If anyone knows of other grants available, please let me or Rowena know.

Formal changes to officers and Committee members will be made in a brief Annual General Meeting (AGM) as part of our first comeback group meeting once we are allowed to hold it. All being well at that resumption meeting Steve Gledhill plans to show a video featuring photographs and movies of Hertbeats' activities since the last AGM.

Above all please keep safe and stay well.

Secretary, Roger Miller

Current Membership. As at 7th July 2020 Hertbeats membership stood at 313, down from 381 prior to the annual renewal.

New Members. Since the last newsletter Christine Burt and Christine Syson have joined Hertbeats. Once again it is unfortunate that they joined just as we have been forced to cancel all our activities. Still there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel. I just don't know how long the tunnel is. Welcome to Hertbeats.

Annual Membership Renewals 1 April 2020. The renewals this year have been disappointing. By the end of June some seventy seven people had lapsed from membership. Of these one person had died and a further five are ill and felt unable to stay with Hertbeats. Nine are unable to get to meetings and six have moved away from Hertfordshire. Three members did not see the point of paying for membership when everything has been cancelled. Seven have lapsed with no reason and 46 have not responded to the reminders. Of those who responded nearly all complimented Hertbeats and had enjoyed being a member but time moves on. I was warned that there might be a COVID-19 effect this year.

Treasurer, Rowena D’Rosario

New treasurer, Rowena D’Rosario, has advised that there has been little movement in the accounts so there is no report. Instead she has written a piece about herself.

“I’ve lived in Harpenden for nearly 27 years with my partner Paul. I have two children. I work as a Programme Manager for BT, managing the rollout of Broadband to rural areas.



My heart bypass has given me a whole new lease of life and total change of outlook. My interests are politics, gardening, listening to music, reading, sewing and doing crosswords and puzzles. I am an active member and past Chairman of Harpenden Tangent, one of the four Round Table clubs, an organisation for women, with a focus on friendship and charitable works. One of my proudest achievements is learning to ski, despite a dislike of cold weather, snow, heights and speed.

Editor, Steve Gledhill

COVID-19 lockdown has been sad and challenging - but it has had its good times too. One cheerful occasion was receiving a lovely photograph of Hertbeats member Rosemary Bramwell sitting on the Hertbeats bench in Clarence Park. There are three Hertbeats benches locally, so I decided to feature them all here.



Above: Hertbeats member Rosemary Bramwell on the Clarence Park bench in St Albans



Left: Our gardening correspondent, Bill Whitehead, in the Community Garden

Below: Bench in Westfield Cemetery in Harpenden with plaque



Outings – Michael Utteridge

We are still constrained from making arrangements for reinstating the planned outings because venues remain closed. Additionally, current social distancing rules covering travel in coaches mean that we would be limited to a maximum of 35 on any outing which is very limiting. As soon as the restrictions are lifted I will try to reinstate the planned two outings to Ham House and Ely.

With no impending outings to report I thought that it would be interesting to look back at the 50 outings that I had the pleasure to organise over the past seven years before I hand over responsibility for organising them to my successor. This is what we did:

- Visits to the theatre - 17
- Castles, cathedrals and stately homes - 10
- National Trust properties - 7
- Museums - 6
- Miscellaneous: boats, trains, greyhound racing, gin distillery, a cemetery and gardens - 10

Starting with the least memorable it has to be Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler" at Milton Keynes Theatre in February 2018. Travelling through a snowstorm to see an acclaimed National Theatre production we were met with an inaudible performance! Ibsen is not noted for his humour and not being able to hear the domestic misery simply added to ours. Our July 2017 visit to Brighton in the middle of a heatwave turned out to be a cold and windswept day on the coast. The beach was deserted as everyone made for shelter. The only saving grace was our visit to the Royal Pavilion and its sumptuous interiors.

Fortunately, we have had many really enjoyable outings. For me the standout outings were the National Stud, Chartwell House and the Crime Museum Exhibition. At the National Stud in Newmarket we learned how the stud stallions have to be on top form three times a day!!!



National Stud in Newmarket

Chartwell House, the home of our greatest statesman Winston Churchill, was still recognisable as a family home.

At the Crime Museum exhibition I discovered that my late mother's apartment was in a Victorian house in London in which an infamous murder took place. Neither my mother nor the rest of the family were aware of this and I now wonder if we had spent time with my mother in the very room where the murder had taken place.

Other memorable outings were the Postal Museum (including the ride on the mail train), the Flower Show at Wisley and the Bluebell Line and Borde Hill Gardens in Sussex.

The Bluebell Line visit was especially memorable because the coach driver had been given the wrong instructions as to where we were going to catch the train. He had to race to catch the train part way along the line!

To complete the list I would add "The King and I" which was one of the best musicals I believe we have seen - apart from "The Phantom of the Opera".

As I prepare to hand over responsibility for our outings I would like to thank everyone for the tremendous support that you have given Corinne and myself and hope to see you soon on an outing.

*If you would like to volunteer to help organise future outings
you may wish to discuss it with Michael.*

Telephone 07931 342808 or email outings@hertbeats.org.uk



*Hertbeats members, Jim Green & Chairman
Brian York, at the Postal Museum*



Outing to Buckingham Palace



*BBC Broadcasting House -
visit to the One Show studio*

Walking Group, Ed Jones

Government advice on Walking Groups stipulates groups of no more than six, including the leader, on a walk. This is important for vulnerable people or those over 70. As a result, I still don't have a date when Hertbeats walks can resume. I know that some group members have walked regularly during the lockdown, but others have not ventured out at all. I have therefore found a flexible five-mile walk in which walkers could return to the start point after one, two, or three miles if they so wish, or carry on for the whole five miles.

Hertbeats Cycling Group, Graham Imber

Hertbeats cyclists now go on healthy bike rides together. Such activities are allowed as long as each group is no more than six and complies with social distancing. Rides will be at 11:00am on the second and/or fourth Wednesdays in warmer months of the year and will be leisurely and not too strenuous.

Routes will be mainly off road and along bridleways and paths and are more suitable for those with mountain or hybrid bikes rather than road bikes with thin tyres. Most rides will initially be around 5 to 8 miles. They won't be a race and we expect to make frequent stops for water and rest. Please wear a helmet.



Graham Imber, Steve Gledhill and Mick Simms of the new Cycling Group

If you would like to take part telephone Graham Imber on 01727 834907
or email cycling@hertbeats.org.uk

Golf Society, Vernon Clough

I have spoken to Heart to Herts (H2H), the Hemel Hempstead Cardiac Support Group, which we team up with. We have agreed that although golf courses are again open for play the social occasion that our meetings involve is neither practical nor without risk, particularly for our age group. So we have decided to put our usual golf meetings on hold until next year.

We have however agreed that informal meetings of small groups may take place in August and/or September if there is a demand for such meetings.

If there is anybody interested in making up a small golfing group then please contact me. Telephone 01582 713080 or by email vclough@ntlworld.com.

Exercise Classes

As explained on page three the short-term future for the traditional cardiac support exercise classes is uncertain in the short term.

Many members have converted to Antonella's Zoom classes as an alternative. They are open to everyone, there are three a week. To find out costs and to book sessions email her at antonellamcm@aol.com or go to the Hertbeats website and click **Activities** then **Exercise Groups**

Reference P1: Tuesday 12.00 noon to 13.00

Class is half an hour. Standing - mobility / strength exercises using props like a chair, stick and hand weights. Half an hour floor work using Pilates technique to work gently abdominals, back and rest of the body too.

Reference H (Heartbeats): Thursday 11.00 to 12.00 noon. The class has warm up/conditioning and abdominal segments.

Floor work is 15 mins duration.

Reference P2: Friday 11.00 to 12.00noon

Similar to P1. Exercises will vary so people can attend both classes and have a different workout.

A Light-hearted Look at Coronavirus and Lockdown by Brian York

A fuller version can be found on the Hertbeats website: www.hertbeats.org.uk

Firstly we have to remember how serious this period continues to be for Hertbeats' members, their families and friends. Nearly all members were/are shielded, extremely vulnerable or vulnerable.

There was plenty of jargon. We had to be **reasonable**, use **British Common Sense** (not sure how it's different from Irish or any other common sense) and **Move On** (not sure where to?). We learned that '**R**' was a number as well as a letter. When it was below 1 (like 0.4-0.7) that was good, but R+ (like even just 1.1) was very bad. **Bubbles** were small groups of people instead of soap blown at children's parties, or when West Ham take to the pitch. It was regarded as good news when we began **to flatten the curve**. Unfortunately some of us put on weight while staying at home. When I looked down at my tum the curve was doing the opposite of flattening!

When this is all over my cat Pixie will not be pleased. She loves me staying at home all the time and helping with all activities such as tapping wrong keys on this laptop I am using to write all this, or putting herself in the washing machine when I am loading it. No, I didn't start it until she came out!

I managed to get a haircut. I had some practice with long hair while I was in hospital for 11 weeks last year, but this time it was longer and the 1970s Kevin Keegan look didn't really suit me. It was even worse when I found an old pair of very short football shorts to complete the '70s look. Some male friends you may know told me to stop complaining about having (long) hair needing to be cut!

Just before lockdown I had cataracts removed and was told only to drive again when my eyes were totally clear. Following the medical advice I waited until I could read the subtitles on BBC 4's Norwegian thriller. It was only afterwards I realised I could have tested my eyesight much earlier by taking a 30 mile drive, as the Prime Minister's chief adviser demonstrated!

When the Prime Minister recovered from his very serious illness we thought the government was at last going to get on top of the virus. Mr Johnson told us we were getting a world-beating 'Test, Trace and Track' system, though at the time of writing this (early July) there is little sign of it and the App, launched with such fanfare, has still not escaped from the Isle of Wight!

When I asked why New Zealand and Germany had done so much better than us (just 22 deaths in NZ compared with tens of thousands in Britain), all the females in my family responded in unison: 'because they've got female leaders!'

Still, things in the UK could have been worse. The USA, rather than us, had Donald Trump as leader. My 10 year old granddaughter thought he had a point when he suggested people might inject themselves with bleach to stop the virus. She pointed out that if you did this you wouldn't then catch it because you would be dead. A certain logic there! Mr Trump's ignorant sayings are too many to recite here, but if I had any hope for him as 'leader of the free world' left at all, it finally disappeared when he revealed that he thought Finland was part of Russia and that Britain wasn't a nuclear power.

But we're still here, so let's keep smiling and get through it all.

Oaklands Lunches & Dinners

Some Hertbeats club members have enjoyed lunches and dinners together in 'The Stables' Restaurant at Oaklands College. We do not know when they will restart but you can prepare for the resumption by reading this!

The meals are prepared and served to a very high standard by the students who are training in the hospitality department of the college. Oaklands is in St Albans off the Hatfield Road beyond Fleetville.

The lunches have taken place about once a month on Wednesdays. They consist of three courses with about three choices for each course. The costs are very reasonable: £8.00 for two courses and £10.00 for three courses. Typically 15 to 20 members Hertbeats members have attended these convivial meals.

The evening dinners also take place about once a month on Thursday evenings. The dinners often have a theme such as 'British Night', 'French Night', 'Burns Night' and 'Pub Classics'. The dinners cost just under £20.00.

Hertbeats member Rita Atkins organises these events.

If anyone who is not already on her list would like to join these events please email her at rita.bandratkins@btinternet.com or telephone 01727 864710. She can then give you more details. When this activity resumes members will be able to enjoy a good meal and meet old friends and make new ones.

Statement on Racial Equality

The Hertbeats constitution is very clear: Membership of the Group shall be open to anyone who has, or has had, a cardiac problem, or anyone who is interested in giving support to these people.

In response to the tragic events of the past weeks, and the anti-racism protests across the UK and around the world, Hertbeats reaffirms that membership is open to anyone, who will be welcomed, and wishes to join and enjoy our activities. Hertbeats is totally opposed to any forms of racism, overt or covert. The Group is committed to combat racism in all its forms and promote harmony and equality between all people.

Remembering Art Classes

Below is an edited tribute of an article written by Connie Pearson and published in the December 2007 issue of Hearts and Minds. It is as a touching reminder. Peter Coombs left a legacy behind, not money or a tangible gift, but something priceless.

Brian Gibson was looking around for a new enterprise for Hertbeats. The solution was pastel painting and we were introduced to Peter Coombs, a cheerful chap with a cockney sense of humour. He scribbled on a board, inviting us to copy and, miraculously, a beautiful sky with puffy white clouds appeared. He would wander around the group praising and teasing us about our efforts. Some of us found a new direction not just a new hobby.

He encouraged us to look further than the nearest scene. He taught us to look at colours and shapes in a new way, making our lives more interesting and renewing our appreciation of the world around.



Local artist Peter Coombs used to hold art classes for Hertbeats members.

Photo shows our Life President Brian Gibson at an art class in 2005.

Maybe some members would like to help restart Hertbeats art classes?

Recipes, Frances Tarrant

Tomato and feta tart

Pastry ingredients

6oz plain flour

3oz butter

8oz cherry tomatoes

4oz feta cheese

Using fingertips rub the butter into the flour with a pinch of salt until it resembles breadcrumbs. Gradually add cold water to form a dough. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate for at least an hour.

Whilst the pastry is chilling, cut the cherry tomatoes in half, place on a baking tray and drizzle with a little olive oil and sea salt. Bake at 180°C for about 45 minutes. Make the tomato sauce by putting all the ingredients in a saucepan with a tablespoon of tomato purée, bring to the boil and simmer until thick.

Roll out the pastry and place in a tin, leaving some of the pastry over the edge to avoid shrinkage. Bake blind i.e. place greaseproof paper on the pastry and cover with baking beans. Cook for 20 minutes at 180°C. Remove paper and beans and cook for a further 5 to 10 minutes. When cold, trim off excess pastry.

When the sauce is cold, spread over the tart case and decorate with the cooked tomatoes and crumbled feta. Garnish with basil leaves if available.

This looks very attractive served with salad leaves and new potatoes.



In the Garden, Bill Whitehead

Late summer is a good time to renovate the lawn while the ground is still warm and damp. If there is a badly worn patch it is better to dig it out and replace it with a turf dug out of another part of the lawn, then reseed the area of removal. Otherwise roughen the worn areas and sprinkle seed over it and water in.

Flag irises flowers get smaller as the size of the root system gets larger. Every three or four years dig them up and divide it into several portions and replant. Cut the leaves down to about 10 cm, 4 inches for the oldies.

Continue to deadhead flowering plants and collect seeds for use next year. Keep them in a paper bag or envelope, not in plastic. Also take cuttings of plants you want for next year.

Carry on feeding plants in pots. Do not forget the weeding - do it with a hand fork to get the roots out.

Before the weather deteriorates look round the garden to see what maintenance needs doing. Things like the shed roof or broken fence posts and panels are far easier to repair in reasonable weather.

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

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.

The group is run by volunteers and is guided by a committee. 'Additionally there are a number of Honorary Officers. Life President is Brian Gibson and Life Vice-President Dr John Versey. Cardiac consultants Dr Masood Khan, Dr Philip Moore and Dr Joban Sehmi are Vice-Presidents with Dr John Bayliss (retired) a Life Vice-President.

Hertbeats Volunteers

Principal Committee Members

	Chairman	Brian York	chairman@hertbeats.org.uk	01727 854072
	Secretary	Roger Miller	secretary@hertbeats.org.uk	01727 766278
	Treasurer	Rowena D'Rosario	treasurer@hertbeats.org.uk	01582 766570
	Speakers	Jim Green	speakers@hertbeats.org.uk	01727 830191
	Exercise Classes	Graham Imber	exercise@hertbeats.org.uk	01727 834907

Committee Members

Care and Welfare	Ann Gibson	01727 859127
Travel Insurance	Jean Sharpe	01727 838193
Trusted Traders	Jean Sharpe	01727 838193
Committee Member	June Gibbs	01582 763526

Organisers

Information & Publicity	Vacancy - please volunteer	publicity@hertbeats.org.uk
Outings	Michael Utteridge	07931 342808 outings@hertbeats.org.uk
Website & Newsletter	Steve Gledhill	07785 381912 webmaster@hertbeats.org.uk

Please send contributions for the next issue by 15th September 2020 to
editor@hertbeats.org.uk or phone 01582 764383