

NHSRF Gwent Branch - 20 Year Anniversary Celebration

We are delighted to welcome you all to our special anniversary celebration to mark 20 years since the setting up of the NHSRF Gwent Branch and also 20 years since we started our meetings at Greenmeadow.

Over the years our Branch has gone from strength to strength and currently we have 75 members both long standing and new. This is thanks in main to the hard working group of Committee members, our lovely meeting venue, the continued support from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and most importantly, you as members who make our meetings a friendly and enjoyable place to socialise.

You will notice that we have on display photographs and items of memorabilia showing the many trips and events that we have enjoyed over the years so please have a look. Also included in the newsletter is a story from Marilyn Beardmore which she wrote in 2018 for NHS/NHSRF 40 year anniversary. This is of her early experience as a trainee nurse when she was just 17 years of age. Some of you will not have seen this before.

Today we are looking forward to our annual quiz which will be conducted by one of our newer members but experienced quizzier, **Nesta Methuen**. This will be followed by tea/coffee and scones. We also have a celebratory cake to mark the occasion organised by Carole Cunnell. We hope that you have an enjoyable afternoon!!

Last month's speaker

You will remember Mary Watkins, the excellent speaker who came to talk to us about her experiences in Rwanda and the work that she is doing particularly with the schools. We collected almost £150 in donations in addition to the profits made from the sale of goods made by the ladies in Rwanda. She wrote:-

“Joanne

Thank you for your kind words - it was an absolute pleasure to speak to your group and the generous donations and sales mean that I have raised enough money to have the furniture made for a whole nursery class!

Please pass on my thanks to the group.

Very best wishes,

Mary



It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of our dear friend and Colleague Marjorie Roberts.

Marjorie was born, a few days following the start of the Second World War, in the small village of Rogiet where she remained for the whole of her life. She attended Abergavenny Grammar School before starting her training at the Royal Gwent Hospital in 1958.

She went on to become night sister in the Accident and Emergency dept also covering the rest of the hospital by night. She was a kind caring nurse, calm in any crisis .

A tribute to Marjorie Roberts

Due to her dedication and love of her work her staff entered her in the first series of 'Nurse of the Year on HTV , resulting in Marj becoming Welsh Nurse of the year.

Marjorie was tempted away from the Royal Gwent by her local G P 's to work at her local surgery Greyhill. and develop the role of Nurse Practitioner. It became a marvellous success and not many people in Caldicot, Rogiet, Undy, and Major, didn't know Sister Roberts.

Marjorie's faith was a very important part of her life and she worshipped in the same church St Mary's for the whole of her life, even arranging every aspect of her funeral there. she didn't want to be a bother to anyone.

Marjorie was a founder member of the NHSRF and supported the branch in any way she could, she was always hands on, preferably behind the scenes. We all remember the cakes, be it Welsh cakes ,Scones or Lemon Drizzle, for the cake tables or Garden parties you could always rely on Marjorie

Sadly Marjorie 's husband Selwyn died following a long battle with cancer, and so began the legend of Marjorie 's garage sales. Where she would collect unwanted items and sell them at these garage sales. Marjorie raised many thousands of pounds for Velindre in gratitude for the excellent care given to Selwyn.

Until very recently she called bingo in the church hall and provided transport for locals to wherever they needed to go. Those of us who have been lucky enough to count Marjorie as a friend know that Marjorie was fiercely independent and much better at giving help than accepting it. She coped with fortitude with many health issues, which would have floored many, but she just got on with it and didn't complain.

Her joy in life was her family , her daughter Carole and her granddaughter Megan, It was a joy to both Carole and Megan that Marjorie was well enough to attend Megan's wedding, and keep the news of impending big health problems to herself, not to spoil the special day , just seven weeks before she slipped peacefully away in St David's Hospice.

We are privileged to have known her and honoured to call her our friend. (Val and Marilyn)
Statement regarding the future of Central Office

We have received this statement from **Chris Kitchin, Interim Chair of the Board of Trustees and Mike Seaton, Chief Executive, NHS Retirement Fellowship.**

"As members have been aware for some time, following the capitation fee increase in February 2023, we have been looking at the place of the Central Office in our five year strategy to safeguard the future of the Fellowship.

"The Board came to the decision that as our staff team, trustees and Members Council representatives successfully work remotely all over the country, there is no longer a need for a permanent office on the south coast . As part of this process, a review of the administrative staffing function has therefore taken place. Following this, the three staff who work in the office in Dorset (**Debbie Arnold, Kay Robinson and Sherry Smith**) have chosen to leave the organisation. They will be leaving the organisation on 31 October when the office will close.

"Their contribution to the charity over very many years service has been immense and we would like to thank them for the considerable work they have done for the Fellowship, most notably the close relationship they have developed with our membership. In recognition of this, the Chair of the Members Council has kindly offered to organise a collection for the three staff and anyone wishing to contribute should contact Lorraine Taylor directly at 0208 994 0519 or email lorrynetaylor221@btinternet.com(cheques to be made payable to the NHS Retirement Fellowship please) by Friday 4 October.

"As the Fellowship adapts for the future, we will still have an administrative function to support the management of the organisation and further details regarding this will be shared in the near future."

Lucia Hiden, Head of Communications , NHS Retirement Fellowship

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All Wales Federation Zoom meeting - 5th September 2024

Several of our members joined this first All Wales Federation Zoom meeting which provided an opportunity to meet the national team. This included **Mike Seaton, Chief Executive, Angela Johnson, Fellowship Support Officer for Wales, Lucia Hiden, Head of Communication and Rod How, Chief Operating Officer.** It was also an opportunity to hear about the experience of other Branches in Wales, some of who are struggling to maintain their membership at the present time.

There are currently 6 Branches in Wales and Angela is working hard to try and establish new branches including reopening the Wales Ambulance Service Branch. Mike Seaton described the financial challenges facing the NHSRF but also the work he is doing to secure more income and to enhance benefits to members. The five year plan is available for members to see on the NHSRF website. Rod Howe is responsible for the managing the internal day to day work including updating the IT infrastructure, the development of a new website and a new finance system with possibly more help for Branch Treasurers.

Lucia works primarily in communications and is involved in the setting up of a new website which they are looking to launch early next year. There are currently 6000 followers on the NHSRF Facebook page although not everyone is a member. She is involved with the development of a Welsh version of the marketing materials and the development of member benefits.

ABERGLASNEY GARDENS 7TH SEPTEMBER



FOOD AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

ALTHOUGH THE WEATHER WAS GENERALLY DRY IT WAS OVERCAST AND GREY FOR MOST OF THE TIME WE WERE AT THE GARDENS. HOWEVER THE WONDERFUL DISPLAYS OF ORCHIDS AND OTHER PLANTS BROUGHT A LOT OF CLOUR TO THE EVENT.

HOUSE AND GARDEN PLANTS WERE FOR SALE AND FEW CAME AWAY WITHOUT AT LEAST ONE NEW PLANT.

THE FOOD STALLS WERE A LITTLE DISAPPOINTING BUT THE LIVE MUSIC WAS VARIED AND FOR THE MOST PART ENJOYABLE ALTHOUGH A LITTLE LOUD AT TIMES.

IT S A FEW YEARS SINCE THE GROUP WAS LAST AT GARDENS AND A LOT OF WORK APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN DONE OPENING MORE OF THE GROUNDS SINCE THEN. ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE FLOWER BEDS STILL LOOKED LOVELY THE RECENT BAD WEATHER HAD TAKEN IT S TOLL ON THE PLANTS.

OF THE 20 PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED ONLY 14 WERE MEMBERS ;THE REST WERE FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

EVERYONE APPEARED TO ENJOY THE DAY AND WE DIDN T GET WET WHICH WAS AN ADDED BONUS.

Delyn

Cake and produce stall - next meeting

Just a reminder that next month we will be having our cake and produce stall to help raise money for our chosen charity. Cakes stalls are always popular and shop bought cakes, mince pies etc should be entirely safe if bought from a reputable dealer. Home-made cakes should be safe as long as the people making them observe good food hygiene and the cakes are stored and transported safely. It is also worth labelling cakes that contain nuts and what type for the benefit of those who have allergies. Torfaen County Borough have produced a very helpful leaflet Copies are available today if anyone would like one. The guidance is not onerous and is really basic common sense.

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MY INTRODUCTION TO NIGHT DUTY by Marilyn Beardmore

Our first stint of night duty loomed. We were seventeen and four months into our training for our Orthopaedic nursing certificate. I had never been up all night before and was excited but also apprehensive. Imagine our surprise on that first night to find my friend and I were to be on the same ward. Most wards were staffed by one nurse at night except spinal wards where two nurses were required to turn patients with spinal injuries every two hours day or night. Occasionally there may be one or two nurses spare, these were called 'runners' and would move between wards helping to lift patients and to relieve nurses for meal break.

My friend Maggie (who was in the same set as me) were to work on the female spinal ward. It was with some trepidation that we arrived on the ward to find we were the only night staff. Following some hasty phone calls to Night Sister, it was clear that they thought my friend was a second year student with the same surname. The mistake would be rectified tomorrow night but tonight we would have to manage.

We had the report on our twenty one patients, there were seven spine patients they would require two hourly turns. One patient, who was paralysed from the neck down and had been transferred from a general hospital with an enormous pressure sore on her sacrum, which would need dressing and packing during the night. There were two or three cases of the day, but nothing major there. Both our eyes kept straying to the patient in the side ward.

Her name was Nora and she had had polio some years previously and was nursed in an 'iron lung'. Neither Maggie or I had seen an iron lung before or met a patient who had had polio before. This iron lung looked like a coffin on legs with Nora's head sticking out at one end with lots of padding wrapped around her neck. It made a continuous horrible noise and frightened us to death.

In the beginning as we give out the milk drinks and biscuits it felt like an adventure, we felt that they must have confidence in the two of us, to leave us 'in charge' little did we realise that they had no option.

We knew that following the drinks we would have to leave the washing up until later, we had to do the bedpan round, pressure areas on all bed patients, any four hourly observations and medicines. Night Sister would come and dispense any controlled drugs along with night sedation. We needed to do the bread and butter for breakfast along with the regular two hourly turns of the spinal patients. We decided to leave Nora until we had settled the rest of the ward.

The lady in the first bed was the one with the huge pressure sore, we knew about it from the report but nothing could have prepared us for what we found when we turned her. First was the smell, it made you feel sick, second was the sheer size of it, it was larger than a dinner plate and

down to the sacrum bone. It took ages to remove the packing and clean the area and repack. We made a mental note to start that dressing early in the morning before we woke the rest of the ward.

Eventually we could put off Nora no longer. We stood each side of her, I am not sure who was most terrified Nora or us. We were honest and said we didn't know what to do so she explained and retried to follow her instructions, we opened portholes on the sides of the box and did pressure areas but in the process knocked over a sand bag that was supporting Nora's foot. Following instructions from Nora we opened the end of the box and we could pull the stretcher out but the sand bag had fallen off the stretcher and we couldn't reach it. Not knowing how long Nora could manage without the iron lung breathing for her, we thought that the best thing was to forget about the sand bag and close the iron lung. We tried slotting the stretcher back in but with no luck, the sand bag was preventing the stretcher going in properly to the end. We couldn't close the iron lung!

Now what to do, we tried pushing and pushing and finally in sheer desperation we pulled the stretcher out as far as we could and then being slimmer decided the only thing to do was for me to climb up onto the stretcher and crawl carefully over the top of Nora and retrieve the offending sand bag as quickly as possible! This was done and the sandbag quickly wedged back into place. The stretcher run smoothly back into position and the iron lung was closed! Never to be opened again by us. For the rest of the night we would manage with the portholes.

The night disappeared in record time, we never stopped for dinner or even a drink. Come the morning despite starting the dressing just after 4am we had no way finished our work when the day staff arrived at 7.20am or even when Sister arrived at 8am. We were still busy doing 'washes' which Day Sister insisted we finish before going off duty.

The lady with the pressure sore somehow got left until last and we arrived with our bowl of hot water hoping to get away with what my mother would call a 'lick and a promise'. No such luck. Our lady announced in no uncertain terms that she didn't put water on her face let alone soap. We were instructed to find an enormous toilet bag full of lotions and potions, each had to be applied carefully and all in an upward direction, you never pull your skin down nurse, it will sag quickly enough without help from you! I can shut my eyes and still hear her now.

It was gone 9am when we left that ward too late and too tired for breakfast. Too exhausted to do anything but flop on my bed. I was still there in full uniform when my friend called me at 6.30pm to get ready for breakfast and another night.

Fifty seven years have passed since that fateful night during which I never nursed or saw another patient in an 'iron lung' or saw another pressure sore to compare with the one that we dealt with. Today nights like that probably wouldn't happen, who knows. It didn't do us any harm. We went on to complete our training and I worked for 30 years on night duty!!

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TRAVEL UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2024

CHRISTMAS OUTING - SWANSEA AS CHOSEN BY MEMBERS

THIS HAS BEEN BOOKED FOR THURSDAY 5TH DECEMBER
PUT IT IN YOUR DIARIES

COST £17 DETAILS NEARER THE DATE - PAYMENT NOVEMBER MEETING

KINKY BOOTS - STARING JOHANNES - 19TH MARCH 2025

EVENING SHOW AT MILLENNIUM CENTRE

COST £36 - PAYMENT OCTOBER MEETING - 20 TICKETS RESERVED

CHICAGO - 8TH MAY 2025 - MATINEE SHOW MILLENNIUM CENTRE

COST £48 - PAYMENT JANUARY 2025

20 TICKETS RESERVED

TINA TURNER THE MUSICAL

12TH FEBRUARY 2026 - MATINEE SHOW MILLENNIUM CENTRE

COST £44 - PAYMENT MARCH MEETING

20 TICKETS RESERVED

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE OUTINGS

WE HAVE VISITED MANY PLACES OVER THE YEARS THAT MEMBERS HAVE ENJOYED AND SOME ARE WORTH ANOTHER VISIT. FOR EXAMPLE, HIGHGROVE GARDENS, SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY, GLOUCESTER QUAYS WITH TEA ON THE RIVER, AS WELL AS THE TRIP ON THE CANAL WITH AFTERNOON TEA, WESTERNBIRT ARBORITUM TO SEE THE AUTUMN COLOURS OR CHRISTMAS DISPLAY.

IF THERE IS ANYWHERE WE HAVE VISITED BEFORE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO VISIT AGAIN PLEASE LET THE COMMITTEE KNOW.

Forthcoming meetings

Our next meeting will be held at 2pm on Monday, 21st October 2024 and we will be delighted to welcome **Nicola Prygodzic, Chief Executive, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board**

Monday, 18th November 2024 - Our speaker will be Jimmy Stokes and the title of his talk is 'Using History in Creative Writing'. He will be talking about his book entitled 'Blood on their Hands'.

Monday, 9th December 2024 - CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Your Committee

Chair	Lynda Evans	Raffle Organisers	Jen Martin
Vice Chair	Vacancy	Greeters	Cynthia Matthews
Secretary	Vacancy		Carol Cunnell

Treasurer	Denise Coldrick		Barbara Davies
Assistant Treasurer	Lilwyn Griffiths		Kay Davies
Speaker Secretary	Joanne Butler		
Membership Secretary	Ann Hyde		
Books/Sales/ Vote of thanks Coordinator	Pam E Jones		
Trips and outings	Delyn Hunt		
Welfare Officers	Caroline Pitt and Megan Williams		

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