

UPBEAT MAGAZINE

Journal of the West Suffolk Heart Support Group



Autumn 2025

www.upbeatheartsupport.org.uk Reg Charity No. 1087415
e.mail upbeatheartsupport@btinternet.com



Patron: Dr Pegah Salahshouri
Consultant Cardiologist
West Suffolk Hospital and
Papworth Hospital, Cambridge

Patron: Mr Daemmon Reeve
Former CEO
R C Treatt PLC
Bury St Edmunds

In this issue ...

- 3** Chairman and Editor's Report
- 6** Secretary's Report
- 8** Treasurer's Report
- 10** Memories of Upbeat's Early Days
- 17** Get Together Lunch
- 18** East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival
- 19** Executive Committee
- 20** Upbeat's Annual Lunch
- 22** A Very Special AGM
- 26** Balance Sheet as Presented to the AGM
- 27** Sudbury Health Awareness Day
- 28** Strawberry Tea at Newton Green
- 31** Be Greener - Recycle Your Pill Strips
- 32** Thank you from Sylvia
- 34** New Members, 100 Club Winners, Absent Friends
- 35** Upbeat Christmas Cards, Southgate Coffee Morning Dates
- 36** A Boyhood in Brandon
- 40** Join the BHF Clinical Research



Secretary: Hilary Neeves
Tel: 01359 232678
e.mail: secretary@upbeatheartsupport.org.uk

Magazine Editor: David Axton
Tel: 01284 747238
e.mail: axeditor@btinternet.com

Chairman's Report (and Editor's)



Where do I begin my piece for this issue of our Upbeat Magazine? Since our last edition I have assumed the mantle of Upbeat Chairman, succeeding Sylvia Baker who fulfilled the role for eleven years. As she said at her stepping down at the AGM, she never envisaged that she would be in the post for such a long time. Likewise, I do not expect to serve for so long - especially since, if I did, I would be well into my nineties!

It can sometimes be a little frightening how quickly time passes, can't it? To me it seems as if time has speeded up as I've grown older. I was looking back through the earlier magazines just recently and see that the first one I edited, after I took over from the late David Williams, was the Spring edition in 2013, which means, of course, that I've been in the job for almost thirteen years! How quickly those years have flown!

It's been very interesting looking back at the previous magazines and seeing the ways in which the magazine has developed, the many events Upbeat has held, the different members who've been active in our organisation, and, quite poignantly, the many whom we've lost during those years, whose names have appeared in our 'Absent Friends' section. Jill Brooks, one of our former Chairmen, used to write for inclusion in the magazine a mini biography of each of those who'd passed away, which made nice personal tributes to each of them.

After Jill stepped down personal recollections of those we'd lost were provided by family members or close friends from Upbeat, but Covid changed a lot. Between Spring 2020 and Autumn 2022 there was no magazine but I

produced eighteen newsletters - one a month for the first year and then every two months until our magazine returned. Those personal tributes didn't resume but our 'Absent Friends' took its present format of a simple list of names.



We've gone to full-colour and where we used to pay a sub-editor to arrange all the page layout and prepare everything for the printer, I now do all that so it saves Upbeat a bit of money. It's a pity in some ways that we no longer carry any advertisements as they used to generate a bit of income to offset printing costs but they too disappeared when Covid struck

Looking back at the Committee members listed in my first magazine I see that only two who were serving then are still on the Committee: Hilary Neeves and Nick Baylie, so well done and thank you to them for all those years of service! The next longest-serving member of the Committee is our present Treasurer, my wife Valerie, who took on being Membership Secretary eleven years ago and then became Treasurer as well. Originally we were meant to share the role when David Camp gave it up but I must confess I have done virtually nothing in that area but she has done all the hard work. We've had a number of other members during my time as Editor, some of whom are still members but others, sadly, have passed away. We are always keen for others to join the Committee to help share the workload so if you are interested please speak to a Committee member to find out more. We are especially in need of someone to arrange visits or events so if you have an interest or a flair for organising such things please do get in touch.

We held our Annual General Meeting in July and it was well-attended but for those of you who were not there I have included a summary of the event on Pages 22-25. It was good to see there some familiar faces from the past including Gilda Nunn who was one of the first nurses to be involved with setting up Upbeat back in 1995, and Tracy Wallace, one of our former cardiac nurses who can still be encountered if you happen to attend the Cardiac Diagnostic Unit at the West Suffolk Hospital.

As we highlighted in our last magazine Upbeat has been running for thirty years now and we hope it will continue for many years more. However, the range and number of social activities we run has diminished greatly in those years. In times past there were trips abroad, bowling matches, jumble sales, fetes, and many more but nowadays our social events are very few, as you will see from our 'Future Events' list on Page 7. Because we rely totally on fund-raising and donations a reduction in these leads to us running at a loss, as you will have read in recent Treasurer's reports and other articles. There are ways you can help boost our funds quite easily, one of which is by joining our 100 Club. By joining you will have the chance each month of winning £100 first prize.

Very recently Valerie and I went down to Wiltshire and Devon for a week, attending the wedding of the daughter of some long-standing friends and then going on to visit family. I used the free wifi at a pub in which we stayed and was unlucky enough to have my email account hacked! How do these villains manage to do such things, I wonder, and what do they get out of it? Lots of people on my contact list received emails which looked as if they were from me but were not. They asked for a favour, many asking the recipient to part with money on my behalf. Luckily most of those who received the false emails thought they were fishy and didn't part with their money, but one or two thought they were genuine and got in touch asking what favour I wanted from them.

It shows how easily we can get caught out by some unscrupulous rogues on the internet so please, take extra care all of you. If something doesn't seem quite right, telephone or otherwise message the person from whom the email seems to have come. I returned home to find loads of phone messages from contacts who'd had those false emails so was able to let them know I'd been hacked. I've spent ages on line to BT trying to get things sorted but it seems I shall be without access to my email accounts for a week or so yet, which is a great nuisance, as you can imagine.

Best wishes to you all.

David

Secretary's Report

Since my last report we have had a lot to celebrate with our AGM and 30th year Anniversary in May. Quite something in this day and age – a charity run solely with volunteers to keep going this long.



We celebrated with an afternoon tea at New Bury and I was so pleased to see so many people attend the event, including members from a long time ago who popped in to say hello. It was also lovely to have most of our instructors and nurses in attendance, including some who were with us years ago. Thank you all for attending and it was a delight to see you all.

With Sylvia stepping down as Chairman after her eleven year stint on the Committee and then as Chairman, David Axton has bravely stepped up into the role. He is also as you know Editor of our Magazine, so he will be extra busy. Thank you, David.

Huge thanks were expressed to Sylvia for guiding us through some difficult times as Chairman and a presentation was given at the party. She will still be around as Honorary President, acting as a high profile supporter and figurehead for the group, promoting its work and encouraging support.

We were lucky to get an article printed in the East Anglian Daily Times and the Bury Free Press about the event with pictures of outgoing and incoming chairman.

Officers' roles and committee members are really hard to find in these times. The lack of volunteers in general across the whole sector is well documented. I repeat what I and others have said so many times before that we really do need more people willing to step up. The Secretary's role will be available next year if anyone has any secretarial experience. We are also needing extra people, perhaps a group of you who could get together as a Social Sub Committee or Fundraising Committee.

This is not new; every charity around is in the same difficulty, lack of people willing to take on these roles. If you feel you could help or know of anyone that could fill these roles, please let one of the Committee know.

We are extremely lucky in having Valerie as our Treasurer. She works tirelessly on our behalf, keeping everything in meticulous order and it is an awful lot of work. So much goes on behind the scenes with The Charity Commission/ Gift Aid etc. that we don't get to see, so thank you, Valerie.

It is even more important to support the events if you can. We will be having a Christmas lunch, and a Tombola Stall at the Charity Night at the Bury St. Edmunds Switch-on Evening on 20th November. We will need lots of prizes for our Tombola Stall so if you have anything you could donate to us, we will be most grateful. Perhaps you know of a business that might donate something? We had a completely random selection of prizes last year, from popcorn to wooden spoons, car polish, nail polish, biscuits, sweets, bubble bath, air fresheners....anything goes! Also volunteers are needed to help on the afternoon and/or evening if you are available.

Help us out if you can. It is a worthwhile thing to help keep the group, not only surviving but thriving and helping as many people as we can. Life is good; be kind to one another.

Best wishes for the Autumn.

Hilary x

Future Events

So far these events have been arranged for the coming year:

Tombola Stall at Bury's Christmas lights switch-on November 20th - items as prizes welcome

Christmas lunch New Bury Centre December 4th

Long Melford Christmas lunch - details to follow

Annual Lunch 2026 March 19th Stowmarket Golf Club

Last sessions 2025: New Bury Wednesday December 17th
Long Melford Tuesday December 16th

First sessions 2026: New Bury Monday January 6th
Long Melford Tuesday January 7th

Treasurer's Report

The Upbeat accounts for April 24 to March 25 were audited in April by our accountants and approved at the AGM in July. A copy was sent out by email and a printed copy is on Page 26 for those of you who have not seen them. They have been uploaded to the Charity Commission with a report for the year. I have also carried out an internal finance audit with our Vice Chair, Darren Welham.



Our reserves are dropping each year but financially we are stable. To meet expenses we need about £4,000 a month in income, which is raised from exercise, seeing the nurse, donations, and fund-raising.

Fund-raising is becoming our biggest problem as we need more people to help organise and run events. Some of our key people are giving up this coming year so we need others to step up to help. It would make such a difference. Please give serious thought to whether you can help in any way and speak to a Committee member if you can. Thank you.

Donations over £50.00

Grant - St. Edmunds Trust £1698.81

HMRC Gift Aid 24-25 £2081.19

Jean Davis £200.00

Collecting tins Long Melford, New Bury, Woolpack £228.55

Jo Matten £121.00

David Catton £40.00

Patrick Napier £50.00

Ed Callaghan £75.00

Bush Lunch Donation £126.00

Tony & Faye Warner £75.00

Thursday Coffee Mornings £274.50

Mike Gooch £340

Donations in memory of:

Marjorie Clarke £50 Edward Williams £325.24

Legacy in the will of John Stemp £2,622.90

Fund-raising February to August 2025

Annual Lunch £1,078.00

Long Melford Easter Raffle £82.00

New Bury lunch £200 & raffle £112.00

Easy Fund-raising £40.02

Joyce Hurrell Quiz & Sales of marmalades & jams £47.00

Strawberry Tea £1,008.90

Some of our members meet for coffee and a chat on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at the Southgate Community Centre, Caie Walk IP33 2PJ from 10.30 to 12.00. Anyone is welcome. Please contact Valerie Axton on 01284 747238. Dates can be found on Page 35.

Gift Aid

If you make a donation to Upbeat we are most grateful. If you pay Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax, as a registered charity we can claim back 25p for every £1 that you give. This increases considerably the value of donations we receive. Last year Gift Aid brought in more than £1,400. Please complete a Gift Aid Declaration Form, available from the Secretary or Treasurer..

Membership

Please remember to let me know if you change your address, phone number, or email address or if you no longer wish to be a member and receive the magazine. Valerie Axton 01284 747238 or valerie_axton@hotmail.com

Finally

It would be much appreciated if, when paying for exercise or to see the Nurse, you have the correct amount of money. Our helpers on the door are having difficulty because many members are offering £20 notes and there isn't enough change to give. Thank you.

Valerie

Memories of Upbeat's Early Days

By Jean Hanna

My husband, William, had a heart attack and spent several days in hospital. Afterwards he had to go to the hospital for several weeks for rehab and that's when they asked if we knew about Upbeat. When we said we didn't they told us that it was somewhere we could go for exercise. I don't think there were the coffee mornings then, just the exercise, then the Thursday coffee mornings came later.



I think we started exercising at the Southgate Centre. I don't remember being at the Sports Centre but I feel so certain that we were at Southgate and later at Hardwick Middle School. We did line dancing which was lovely! Poor William got his feet in a bit of a dither but it was so lovely that the hospital put us in touch. Of course the nurses were there which was reassuring. I think Ali Shorten was the first – she was lovely. It was only one night a week – a Friday – and we went pretty regularly. It was so nice to get to know more people. I remember there was Greta and John, David and Elizabeth - I can't remember their surname but I think they lived in Philip Road but after a long time she became unwell, I think with Parkinson's. Rodney and Ella were very much involved in those days. I don't think there were more than just nine or so. Ann and Geoff joined later, and Amy. She was on her own, bless her heart. Her daughter was a hairdresser and she'd bring her mum along and drop her off then she'd come back later and have a coffee with us all.

Much later there were more of us but I can't think of any more from the very early days. We really enjoyed it. We enjoyed the company and it was lovely for us to get out, after all you never knew after a heart attack, how things were going to be in the future and how you'd end up. But William and I didn't really get involved, if you know what I mean. It was Ella and Rodney; she was a sweet little lady. We went to the Strawberry Teas but we didn't go on any trips. There was the Annual Lunch at Stoke-by-Nayland, but I always wondered why our table was always the last to be served our meals! We thoroughly enjoyed it because

we met other people on our table. There were people from Sudbury so it was nice to meet new ones and to have a chat. Then the next year you might see them again – not necessarily on your table but you'd recognise them. We didn't go on any trips really. Will wasn't much of a traveller and he'd say "I don't want to go. I'll just sit there and nobody will talk to me." I said, "Well you've got to talk to people, then they'll answer you!"

So it was mainly the exercise, and the coffee mornings. It's a shame that they might not go on because they were lovely, especially when William died. I had somewhere to go. It's important, when your husband goes, you need to get out and be among people. Maybe if you're feeling a bit down – you've had trouble getting out of bed – but you sit down and just mention it to someone and you find they're in the same boat. They found it hard getting out of bed too, and that makes you feel better, knowing you're not the only one. This is one of the things I've loved about Upbeat because you've been away from your four walls and you've been seeing new faces.

I still hear about Upbeat because Bridget rings me up, and I get the magazine; that keeps me in touch. I look at the trips and think how much I'd love to go on that; I'd love to go on the Broads but of course I can't now, but it's nice to read about the trips and to see the photos. I'd recommend people to join Upbeat if they've had a heart attack because you've got the nurses for advice and you've got people around who know what you've been through and they understand because they've been through it themselves. I sometimes think that the main thing is having someone to talk to, especially if you're on your own, and to get out. I'd love to be able to get out but I can't now because of several problems. I think Upbeat is an organisation that ought to be made more known. It's a pity that the hospital doesn't do it any more. If only they'd just tell people who've had heart attacks that there is a place you can go to where the people understand and can advise and help you. Upbeat is a wonderful organisation.

By Daphne Simpson

I worked at the college for 24 years and one day suddenly got these pains, had to call a doctor, and next minute I was in hospital. After the heart attack I was sent to rehab and there I met Jill, Jill Brookes, and she became a very

good friend of mine. When I went to my first exercise class at the hospital I was very nervous but after the class Jill came up and introduced herself. I don't know why she did but she introduced herself and asked my name and then each week, because we had the six weeks of rehab, each week after the class we would go for a coffee.



We got on really well and at the end of the six weeks she said, 'I don't want our friendship to finish and I don't want the exercise to finish.' I'd never exercised in my life before but we'd both benefited from it. She said she'd like to get something going. I didn't do any of the setting up. She did it all but I helped her a bit. She said we'd have to have a nurse and we had Ali Shorten, who was a lovely nurse. We looked at various places, one was Risbygate Sports Club but that wasn't suitable. Then we found this little room at the Sports Centre. We could have it on a Friday night and the class was for two hours. Neither of us had exercised before but after a while we moved to a bigger room.

It's hard to remember after 30 years but some of the people I remember were Heather Bamber and Tom who were both teachers, and Ella and Rodney Johnson. Ella came to support Rodney but she was very busy and did everything for him. She was there to meet and greet people.

Jill never wanted to charge a fee for joining. She said some people can't afford it and she never wanted anybody not to come because they couldn't afford it. We all got into it and I felt safe because there was a nurse there. Having a heart attack was frightening but with a nurse there I felt safe. Our instructor was Sarah Linton. She had two little girls but as the class was in the evening she could come but then she had a little boy and I think that's when she left. Also I remember that the very youngest person who'd had a heart attack was 37. I can't remember his name but he worked at the Borough Offices, so of course he couldn't come to the classes because he was at work. One venue that I notice was not mentioned in the article in the last issue of the magazine was the Sugar Beet. We had quite a long time there, and we used

St John's Church hall for a while but the parking was difficult.

I left work. The doctor said if I could afford it I should so I did. I used to walk a lot but I only walked near the hospital in case I had another heart attack. It was so stupid really but I was very nervous. We used to have the coffee mornings at Southgate and we could take the little ones along. I was looking after my granddaughter, Emma, several days a week and she could come. Ella was there too, making the coffees.

I've got an Upbeat book from 2003 and you can see all that we used to do. I had a triple bypass in 2018. I've had three actually. I went for an ECG at the hospital and the doctor said I needed a triple bypass and I was shocked. He could see that from looking at the ECG. He said I couldn't go home but he did let me come home and get some clothes. I went to Papworth and I was there six weeks. And then the worst thing that ever happened in my life, I lost my son the following year. He was found dead in bed. He was 50. I cried and cried for two years and made myself ill but I had to be strong for my two granddaughters.

After my husband died Upbeat was my saviour. I didn't drive but I could still go out and at Upbeat I felt safe and had good friends. I went on Upeat's visit to Amsterdam and we had a whale of a time. We went to Brighton and to Kent and there were several trips abroad. The river trips were very popular and we had to get our names down really quickly if we wanted to go.

By Patrick Simpkin

I was very fortunate to have joined Upbeat 20 years ago and to have met so many wonderful people during this time. The nurses are magnificent! They kept telling me to have a scan to see my blood flow but the 'experts' said it wasn't needed and gave me a double pacemaker. That made things worse and I had to go back and have two and a half stents put in, which worked! I must thank the exercise instructors for keeping me well. The 'Top Brass' of Upbeat should be given gold medals for all the



hard work and time they put in to keep Upbeat going.

I trained mostly at the old New Bury Centre and after a while myself and a friend, the late Ricky Lee, decided we needed to meet and greet new members as they came through the door. This can be the most difficult task to do when you are shy and after we had done this for quite a while the then Chairman, Jill Brooks, told both of us that we must stop doing it as we hadn't passed any tests. As two true old 'Suffolk Boys' we took no notice and carried on doing the task. A month later Jill Brooks presented us with yellow badges with 'New Bury Team' printed on them and she didn't ask us to take any tests! Members quite often ask me why I have a yellow badge and I say I'm proud to have worn it for the past 15 years!

I got a shock one day when I was greeting a new couple and I asked the gentleman how he was. He said he had 6 months to live! For once in my life I was lost for words. Later he told me that he had heard about Upbeat and how happy the place was so he decided to join as he wanted to enjoy the last 6 months of his life. The couple certainly did and joined in this happy place.

Martyn, one of our instructors, was quite shy when he started with Upbeat. One day when we were getting to the end of the session and in a circle, bending forward and with one leg stretched out at the back, Martyn was next to me. He could see that I had one leg not straight so he took hold of my leg to put it straight, at which I shouted out, "Stop that! I'm not that kind of boy!" All the class burst out laughing and poor Martyn went as red as a beetroot.

On another occasion my friend Ricky Lee was training in the front row. He was wearing a bright yellow Upbeat T-shirt. I had never seen one that colour before nor have I since. Martyn said to Ricky, "I like the colour of your T-shirt." And I butted in and said it was for safety reasons. "Years ago," I said, "in the coal mines they took a canary down in a cage. If the canary died they knew there were dangerous gases and they had to get out as quickly as possible. We put Ricky at the front because sometimes there are obnoxious gases. If Ricky falls to the floor we all get out quickly!"

We enjoy a laugh at Upbeat.

By Geoff and Ann Clarke



Geoff and I started exercising with Upbeat on Friday nights at the Sports Centre in the mid-1990s and were there for a few months before we moved to Hardwick Middle School. I can remember having to register in the reception area of the Sports Centre which was extremely crowded, so it was almost impossible to find Ella Johnson sitting at the Reception Desk. Then there was a rush to get upstairs to exercise with Sarah Linton in the large exercise room – we never managed to get in there as the original members filled that room! We generally exercised in one of the squash courts, which were quite cramped, with one of the Sports Centre staff. There were sometimes three classes in all as the rooms were small. Afterwards, several members went off to the cafeteria / bar.

When we moved to Hardwick, the registration and exercise facilities were much less crowded and far better with two classes, aerobics in the dining hall/ stage and circuits in the gym with the instructors taking it in turns to take each class. Even so, a group of the original members followed Sarah wherever she taught, so the circuit class became very large when she took it! Besides the cardiac nurse, Ali Shorten, a physio from the hospital visited once a month.

We did try the Line Dancing class at Southgate taught by Jane once, but we couldn't keep up! It was certainly fun with lots of laughter. We also went to concerts at the Unitarian Chapel given by Jill Brooks' daughter, Catherine's, choir, the King's Taverners, and to social events which were then held in Sudbury Town Hall.

We also started going to the Thursday coffee mornings at Southgate Community Centre in the early 2000s, by which time they were well established in the committee room, quite a squeeze as they were popular. My most vivid memory is of Ella Johnson making her way round the room, ensuring she spoke to everyone in turn, and always showing such interest in everyone's lives and news. She was so welcoming to us all. We can also particularly remember going to the Flying Fortress for our annual lunches on several occasions and sitting in a separate dining room with a very long table.

Although we found the Sports Centre quite off-putting, I'm glad we stuck with Upbeat as it has provided us with such support and so many good friends over its 30 years.

Editor's Note: I'm very sorry to report that on August 16th Geoff passed away. He and Ann have been great supporters of Upbeat for many years and we extend our sympathy to her and to their children, Cathy and Alan.

The Beginnings of the Thursday Coffee Mornings

The original exercise classes held on Friday evenings started in 1995 at the Bury St Edmunds Lesiure Centre where, after class, some would gather in the bar there. For others, though, it was thought that a coffee morning would provide an appropriate opportunity to socialise and support one another so a coffee morning was started at Southgate Community Centre where the guarantee included 'a warm and friendly welcome and a good selection of biscuits'!

A chap called Stan Bradford was the first organiser or host. He had retired from the RAF and as he had friends in the Honington Big Band he facilitated a very successful concert for us in what was then the hospital gym. Ella and Rodney Johnson followed Stan as the leaders, together with Greta and John Steed and Ann Clarke. who has continued to lead the Thursday coffee mornings right up to the present day.

Members provide the coffee and biscuits (lately with generous contributions of coffee and tea from 'Toast' coffee shop in Sudbury). At Christmas goodies are shared and sometimes on birthdays and other celebratory occasions cake appears. Members attending contribute to a kitty from which donations to Upbeat are made towards the cost of hiring the venue and general Upbeat expenses.

Like all Upbeat functions some members attend regularly while others drop in from time to time or move on. Today numbers attending are quite small and as members have aged and various health and other problems have arisen it has become increasingly difficult to keep the sessions going and it might be that soon these small but valued events will cease to be but we shall do our best to keep them going.

Get Together Lunch

At New Bury Community Centre on April 30th 2025 a large group of Upbeat Heart Support members were treated to a delicious lunch, all cooked and served by the lovely Debbie, and Tracey and Linda from the Centre's Hub Café.

A HUGE THANK YOU to them for giving us such a treat. Everyone enjoyed the day and we really appreciate you giving up your time for us. It is a beautiful thing to see how much Debbie and the girls are supporting the local community. Thank you from all of us.



Thanks also go to 'COOK' shop in Bury St Edmunds for the delicious food. This was an initiative from the Cook Frozen Meal franchise to encourage 'Eating Together' in the community and they provided a number of lunches free.

Hilary x



East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival

For six days, from August 20th - 25th, the 33rd East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival was held in St. Edmundsbury Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds. Each year volunteers are needed to help run the festival, profits from which are shared among local charities. Several Upbeat members volunteered their services during the festival and as a result Upbeat will be one of the charities to benefit financially. Here are a few photographs taken during the festival.



Don't need it any longer? Is it still in good condition? Why not donate it to a British Heart Foundation Charity shop?

The BHF has charity shops in Bury, Thetford, Sudbury and many other local towns and welcomes donations, including furniture and electrical items. The charity will even collect some things from your home. All upholstered furniture must have fire labels and everything donated must be in a saleable condition.

For more information, contact your local BHF shop:



8 King Street, Thetford
18 Abbeygate Street, Bury St Edmunds
8 Old Market Place, Sudbury

UPBEAT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

David AXTON (Chairman)

e-mail: chair@upbeatheartsupport.org.uk
Tel: 01284747238

Hilary NEEVES (Secretary)

e-mail: secretary@upbeatheartsupport.org.uk
Tel: 01359 232678

Valerie AXTON

(Treasurer & Membership Secretary)

e-mail: treasurer@upbeatheartsupport.org.uk
Tel: 01284 747238

Darren WELHAM (Vice-Chairman)

e-mail: darrenwelham@btinternet.com

Rosemary RAYSON e-mail: hairyscary7@gmail.com

Nicholas BAYLIE e-mail: nbaylie@aol.com

Richard MORRIS e-mail: richard460morris@btinternet.com

Alan CHAPMAN e-mail: tilbob@btinternet.com

David BYATT e-mail: dbyatt01284@gmail.com

Ilva MAXEY e-mail: pimaxey@gmail.com

Bill KETTYLE e-mail: bill.kettyle@gmail.com

CARDIAC NURSE REPRESENTATIVE

Kate TURNER e-mail: caturm@sky.com

Nurses: Anne Graham, Mandy Scales, Kate Orriss, Shirley Stringer

EXERCISE INSTRUCTOR REPRESENTATIVE

Michelle JERMY e-mail: michellejermy@hotmail.com

Instructors: Peter Azzopardi, Martyn Blackford, Yvonne Galloway

WEB SITE CO- ORDINATOR/MEDICARD

David CAMP e-mail: davidcamp44@btinternet.com

MAGAZINE EDITOR

David AXTON e-mail: axeditor@btinternet.com

GRANT FUNDING

Hilary NEEVES (Secretary)

e-mail: secretary@upbeatheartsupport.org.uk

SOCIAL EVENTS & FUNDRAISING

At present no-one is responsible for these but we would greatly welcome somebody to take on the role.

Our Annual Lunch

March 20th saw many members gather once again at Stowmarket Golf Club for Upbeat's Annual Lunch. Last year we had experienced some overcrowding and significant delays for some members in being able to get their meals but this year the Club had reduced the number of tables. This did mean that fewer people could attend but it allowed more room for us to circulate and chat and even for a few sprightly members to get up and dance during the entertainment that came after we'd eaten!

As previously the bar was well-patronised as members arrived, some opting to sit with cups of coffee while others went for something a little stronger. A seating plan was on display so that members were easily able to find which were their tables for lunch. The Club had set the tables very nicely with linen cloths and fresh flowers - always a nice touch! - and Giles Washbourn was busy with his camera recording the event for the magazine and our website.

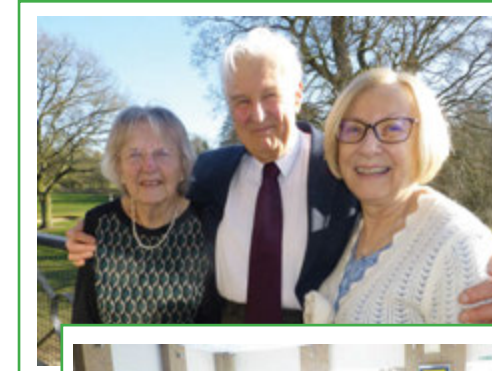
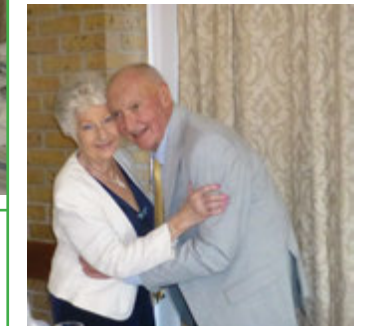
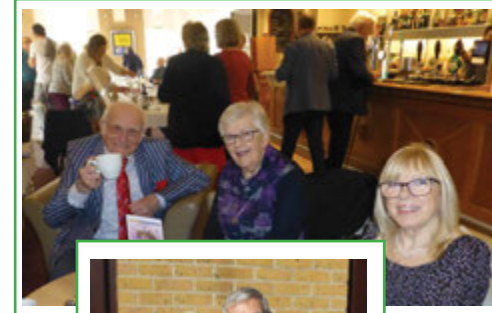
We had a choice of beef or turkey (or some of both if we wished) with all the usual trimmings and the general opinion was that the chefs had done us proud. When we had finished eating the kitchen staff came out to receive our compliments and thanks, which included a gratuity to be shared among them.

After-lunch entertainment was provided by a singer, Dan McClelland, who delivered a varied programme of songs including standard ballads, some from the shows, and a few more up-tempo numbers. Among the favourites was his rendition of Neil Diamond's 'Sweet Caroline', which had most of us joining in, complete with arm-waving and choruses of "So good! So good! So good!"

There was a goodly array of prizes for the raffle, which was very well-supported, and after Dan had ended his set some members drifted out onto the terrace to enjoy the sunshine before we said our goodbyes and made our ways home.

The function made a profit of £1,078 for Upbeat funds and our former Chairman, Sylvia, now Honorary President of Upbeat, has said that she will be happy to arrange next year's Annual Lunch so we look forward to that. Thank you, Sylvia.

David



All photographs courtesy of Giles Washbourn

A Very Special Annual General Meeting 30



We couldn't let Upbeat's 30th Anniversary pass without marking it in some special way so the Executive Committee had decided to use the occasion of the Annual General Meeting on July 8th to celebrate. Following the formal business of the meeting at the New Bury Centre, a splendid buffet was laid on by Tracey and the staff of the Hub Café.

You might ask 'What is the reason for having an Annual General Meeting?' Such a meeting, which all members are invited to attend, serves three main purposes:

- To allow members to hear reports from the Committee on the work of Upbeat over the year.
- To elect the Officers and Committee for the next year.
- To make any changes to the Constitution.

Chairman, Sylvia Baker, welcomed all present to the AGM which was also a special event to mark 30 years of Upbeat's existence. She stressed that the group is run entirely by volunteers and thanked all those who helped in many different ways to keep Upbeat going. She referred specifically to the Executive Committee members, especially the Secretary and Treasurer.

Although she was at the end of her term as Chairman, she would continue to work for Upbeat and would arrange the Annual Lunch for 2026.

Next the Upbeat Treasurer, Valerie, delivered her report. Accounts papers had been distributed and Valerie outlined the group's financial situation. There were still good reserves but they were about £12,000 less than in 2024. The group continued to run at a loss each month. Income was derived from exercise fees, 100 Club, donations, and grants, and from social activities. The Accounts Sheet can be found on Page 26 of this magazine.

Upbeat accounts had been presented at Committee meetings every two months, she reported, and there had been separate internal audits carried out by three members of the Committee in addition to the external auditors. She recommended to the meeting acceptance of the accounts for the year. Margaret Orr proposed that they be accepted and Ilva Maxey seconded the proposal, which was carried. Valerie concluded by thanking former Treasurer David Camp for his role in authorising all bank payments.

Valerie recommended that Moore Green continue as auditors. David Camp proposed that they be retained. His proposal was seconded by David Deacon and passed by the meeting.

Valerie continued in her role as Membership Secretary, reporting that currently there were 570 members with an age profile of mostly 80+. Problems with recruiting new members were exacerbated by the fact that Abbeycroft Leisure which operates leisure centres in the region now offers 6 months free membership to people with heart conditions.

Following these reports the Committee stood down and a new Committee was elected. David Axton was nominated as a new Committee member by David Camp and seconded by Patrick Simpkin.

Nominated for Officers were: Chairman - David Axton, Treasurer - Valerie Axton, Secretary – Hilary Neeves, Vice-Chairman – Darren Welham, (Proposed by Ilva Maxey and seconded by Sylvia Baker.

Committee members willing to stand again were: Nick Baylie, Rosie Rayson, Ilva Maxey, David Byatt, Alan Chapman, Darren Welham, Richard Morris, Bill Kettle.

It was decided to vote en bloc for these posts. Giles Washbourn proposed and Mike Gooch seconded. They were all returned by a unanimous show of hands.

Hilary read letters which had been received thanking Sylvia for her 11 years of service to Upbeat and David Deacon gave an address of thanks. The Executive Committee had discussed a possible future role for her and she was offered the post of Honorary President of Upbeat, which was approved by the AGM by a unanimous show of hands.

There followed a presentation to the staff of the Hub Café and to Debbie, manager of the New Bury Centre, for their support and help during the year, after which the meeting closed at 3.40 pm and was followed by the generous buffet provided by the Hub Café.



Balance Sheet for Upbeat Accounts as Presented by the Treasurer at the
Annual General Meeting

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|----|--|-----------------|-------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | UPBEAT Registered Charity no. 1087415 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | Income and Expenditure for the Year ended 31st March 2025 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |
| 6 | Income | | 2025 | | 2024 |
| 7 | | | | | |
| 8 | Exercise Income | | £17,775.00 | | £20,698.03 |
| 9 | Nurse Income | | £2,268.40 | | £2,163.00 |
| 10 | Donations/Grants | | £14,198.52 | | £8,429.74 |
| 11 | Gift Aid | | £1,409.15 | | £1,553.13 |
| 12 | Trips | | £4,946.40 | | £3,809.00 |
| 13 | Sales | | £469.50 | | £508.75 |
| 14 | Social/Fund Raising | | £4,622.15 | | £4,938.32 |
| 15 | 100 Club | | £3,666.00 | | £3,999.00 |
| 16 | Bank Interest Received | | £1,721.18 | | £1,629.51 |
| 17 | | | | | |
| 18 | Total Income | | £51,076.30 | | £47,128.48 |
| 19 | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | |
| 21 | Expenditure | | | | |
| 22 | | | | | |
| 23 | Instructors & Nurses | | £30,867.85 | | £32,258.30 |
| 24 | Mileage | | £2,629.32 | | £2,637.60 |
| 25 | Training | | £75.00 | | £550.00 |
| 26 | Room Hire | | £10,053.51 | | £8,623.70 |
| 27 | Postage Stationery | | £1,032.50 | | £1,595.95 |
| 28 | Printing | | £435.00 | | £1,724.00 |
| 29 | Sundry Expenses | | £3,139.37 | | £938.69 |
| 30 | Insurance | New for 2024-25 | £335.56 | | 0 |
| 31 | Examination of Accounts | | £318.00 | | £300.00 |
| 32 | Social/Fund Raising | | £2,261.64 | | £652.40 |
| 33 | 100 Club | | £1,426.00 | | £1,669.50 |
| 34 | Trips | | £2,402.00 | | £5,363.50 |
| 35 | Website | New for 2024-25 | £115.19 | | 0 |
| 36 | Catering | | £1,127.77 | | £2,629.91 |
| 37 | Bank Charges -CAF bank | | £60.00 | | £60.00 |
| 38 | Merchandise | | £312.00 | | £159.89 |
| 39 | | | | | |
| 40 | Total Expenditure | | £56,590.71 | | £59,163.44 |
| 41 | | | | | |
| 42 | Net Surplus/(Deficit) for year | | -£5,514.41 | | -£12,034.96 |

SUDBURY HEALTH AWARENESS DAY – 14TH JUNE 2025

The Awareness Day held at the Arts Centre at St. Peter's Church in Sudbury is organised by Hardwicke House Group Practice and is an opportunity once a year for local groups to get together and show what help is available for local people. There were varied participants this year, local surgeries, mental health awareness groups, dogs for the deaf, U3A, defibrillator training, and many others. Upbeat was there to showcase what we offer in the way of rehabilitation classes at Long Melford and also the social aspect of the group.

There was a steady stream of visitors and the local choir attended to entertain us during the morning, which certainly brought in an audience from the market stalls. I hope we got our message across and it was lovely to catch up with some older members we had not seen for a while including a lady who had raised over a thousand pounds for Upbeat to buy our very first defibrillator. She was a swimming instructor and her name is Francis Butler so that made my day as she was still very interested in what we were doing. I would like to thank Bill Kettle who came to accompany me for the day.



Committee member Bill Kettle was there
to help raise awareness of Upbeat

Hilary



STRAWBERRY TEA

Once again the sun shone as it seems always to have done for Upbeat's Strawberry Tea at Newton Green village hall. Newton is a very pretty village with some lovely old houses and a popular golf course which is right beside the main road through the village. A side road

leads to the well-appointed Village Hall, converted from the former village school in 1938, and this has been the venue for our annual 'strawberryfest' for a number of years. Those who've been attending for years cannot remember a year when the sun didn't shine for us. Happily, this year, Thursday July 3rd, maintained the tradition!

Events such as the Strawberry Tea require lots of organisation and preparation, not least on the actual day of the event. Around West Suffolk members were busy throughout the morning (and in some cases the night before), making cakes, sandwiches, and all sorts of goodies in addition to the multitude of strawberries needed to feed us all.



Upbeat Secretary, Hilary, prepared several delicious pavlovas - one of her specialities!



Lots of work setting up needs to be done before the event can take place and we are very grateful to the willing helpers.

did so, 'Thank you, ladies and gentlemen! We were very grateful for the setting up - and the taking down again later.'

Willing workers with strong arms arrived early to help set up gazebos, arrange tables, hang bunting, and generally get the gardens of the hall looking suitably festive. And what a grand job everybody

There was a splendid display of plants on sale, mostly due to the extremely generous donation from Woolpit Nurseries who even exceeded the quantity they gave us last year. Hilary and Giles' cars arrived loaded, with plants in their



boots and on the seats. Thank you to the Nurseries, and to Hilary and Giles for getting them for us, as well as to Barbara Scarfe and Rosie Rayson who did a sterling job manning the stall throughout the afternoon.



Hilary's family took time out for a photo shoot.

Music was provided by John Thurman and floral decorations for the tables were kindly provided by Jasmine King who, together with her mother and other members of Hilary's family, helped wherever necessary.

Clare, Val, and Joyce led the small army of ladies in the kitchen, preparing and setting out the sumptuous feast members had provided.



Clare and a team of helpers made sure we were well-fed.



Gazebos provided very welcome shade from the hot afternoon sun.

The sun was really quite hot during the afternoon and most people sought shade under the gazebos with friends. One enterprising group had even brought along their own wine and an ice bucket to keep the vino cool!

However, there were some who took the opportunity to top up their suntans by shunning the shade.



David Axton again came up with a couple of quiz sheets to get people thinking and Sylvia, Wendy, and Lynne were busy throughout selling raffle tickets.



Altogether it was a most enjoyable afternoon and as always provided an occasion for Upbeat members from Long Melford and Bury to get together.

As well as being a lovely social occasion, the event raised more than £1,000 for Upbeat funds, which was marvellous! Well done, and thank you, to all who worked to make it such a success, and a special big 'THANK YOU' to all who attended.

David

BE GREENER - RECYCLE YOUR PILL STRIPS

It is very easy just to put your empty pill strips into the bin but did you know that like many other forms of packaging they can be recycled?

SUPERDRUG in Bury St. Edmunds' Cornhill provide a recycling bin by the prescription counter. They have found a way of separating the foil from the plastic strips so that it can all be used again.



I keep a plastic bag to put them in when discarded and when I go into Bury, about once a month, I just hand them in knowing they will not go into landfill.



Also, used frozen food bags can be recycled at supermarkets.

Even your empty crisp packets need not go into the bin. Walkers, the crisp manufacturer, encourage recycling of their crisp packets along with bread wrappers and many other packaging items which most people just put into their non-recyclable bins.

I try to recycle as much as possible and if we all do our little bit it will make a difference, help keep the rubbish down, and benefit the environment.

Happy recycling.

Neva

'THANK YOU!'

FROM OUR OUTGOING CHAIRMAN - NOW HONORARY PRESIDENT!



What a wonderful send off you gave me at the last AGM and the amount given by you all surprised and staggered me! Wow! Thank you. I will enjoy spending this and so far I have purchased a Ninja air fryer. At the AGM I tried to thank the members who help to keep Upbeat running and I hope I did not forget anybody but you should all appreciate the following people:

Valerie and David Axton – Treasurer and magazine editor, Hilary and Giles – Secretary and unofficial photographer, Martyn Roper – tea and coffee maker at Long Melford for many years, the Executive Committee, Val Carr, Ilva Maxey, Sue Tyrrell, Nick Baylie, and Margaret Orr who man the desks taking money, Alan, David, and Nick who set up and take down in Bury, and Patrick and Bill who do the job in Long Melford, Bill and Clare Kettyle – who do everything! Then there are our lovely nurses, Kate, Mandy, Anne, Shirley, and Katie, plus our wonderful instructors, Michelle, Yvonne, Peter, and Martyn - fantastic people all of them!

You all know how much I have loved being part of this fantastic organisation and hopefully I have played a small part in shaping this group. I have made so many friends during my time as Vice and then Chairman and I sincerely thank you for all the support and help you have given me.

There has been lots of fun and laughter, as well as sadness at times, and lovely memories that I will treasure – and I did get to go to Buckingham Palace which was unforgettable!

You know that I am and always will be passionate about Upbeat and feel that it is a fantastic organisation and we help so many with recovery, friendship, and support. Please continue to help it keep going. Members often tell me what Upbeat has meant to them, how much we have helped their recovery,

and what we as a group mean to them ... that's what we are all about.

It has been a real experience which has helped to shape me going forward as a person. When I lost my lovely husband I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be working again yet you all helped me to carve out this new life. I agreed to help and seventeen years ago I became Vice-Chairman. I understood that committee roles were for a period of three years. Well! Here we are thirteen years later! I will now stop bossing you all about, but I'm still going to be part of Upbeat so you haven't quite got rid of me. I will be organising the next annual lunch in 2026 so you will hear more about this nearer the time.

You elected me to be Upbeat Honorary President going forward and as I wasn't quite sure what this role entails I did a bit of searching on line and discovered the following:

It can be simply an Honorary Title, given to a founder or long-serving supporter as a way of recognising their dedication, or a President of a charity can serve as a figurehead ambassador with no direct governance responsibilities, lending their profile and connections to the charity's work. A Figurehead President can be a public ambassador, acting as an external advocate, spreading the word about the charity's mission and successes. S/He can also be a profile-raiser, using their high-profile status to support fundraising efforts and engagement activities. I hope I will be able to do my best to carry out some of those roles.

A new committee has a change to new leadership and I believe David Axton will be fantastic as your new Chairman. I wish him every success going forward and to you all I say,

Thank you all.

Sylvia x

New Members

Mr & Mrs Paul & Jacque Frazer Mr & Mrs Barry & Susie Dove
 Mrs Carol Mulley Mr & Mrs Jeff & Chris Paine
 Mrs Jill Franklin Dr Frank & Mrs Sharon Craig Mr Peter Stearn
 Mr & Mrs Adrian & Janice Osborne Mrs Margaret Freeman
 Mrs Maureen Lazarus Mrs Marie Lovering Mrs Maureen Andrews
 Mr & Mrs Frank & Janice Harper

*We extend a warm welcome to you all. We hope you receive support, help, and companionship from being an Upbeat member.
 Due to the printer's deadline, this list is correct up to the end of August 2025.*

100 Club Winners

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| February 2025 | 1st Prize £100 Mrs F Stemp No. 087 (£50 donated to Upbeat) 2nd Prize £43.00 Mrs Claudia E Williams No. 243 |
| March 2025 | 1st Prize £100 Mrs Marisa Marshall No. 153 (£100 donated to Upbeat) 2nd Prize £46.50 Mr David Woodward No. 291 |
| April 2025 | 1st Prize £100 Mr & Mrs C Smith No. 277 2nd Prize £48.50 Mr A Martin No. 220 |
| May 2025 | 1st Prize £100 Mrs Janice Purves No. 140 2nd Prize £48.50 Mr David Cook No. 199 |
| June 2025 | 1st Prize £100 Mr B Evans No. 183 2nd Prize £48.50 Mr G Clarke No. 77 |
| July 2025 | 1st Prize £100.00 Mrs Jill Richardson No. 252- (£30 donation to Upbeat) 2nd Prize £48.50 Mr Steve Dennington No. 181 |
| August 2025 | 1st Prize £100 Mrs Linda Munson No. 163 2nd Prize £48.50 Mr Brian Mackender No. 281 |

The amount of second prize money increases if more people join the 100 Club during the year.

Absent Friends

We are sad to report that since the last issue of our Upbeat magazine the following members have passed away:

*Geoff Clarke - Member since 1995 Edward Williams – member since 1995
 Suzanne Brown -member since 2005 Robert Kirkman – member since 2015*

We offer our condolences to their families and friends .

UPBEAT CHRISTMAS CARDS

As in previous years Christmas cards will be on sale in aid of Upbeat funds. Two designs are available, as shown below, with ten cards in each pack.

Packs are available at all venues, costing £3.99 per pack or three packs for £11. If you cannot get to our venues in Bury or Long Melford, please contact our Treasurer, Valerie, to place your order. She can be reached by telephone on 01284 747238 or by e-mail at : treasurer@upbeatheartsupport.org.uk



As Night Draws In



Preparing For Christmas

Southgate Coffee Mornings Thursdays 10.30 am

On the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month a small group of members meet for coffee, biscuits, and a chat at the Southgate Community Centre. These coffee mornings have been a feature of Upbeat for many years but recently, for various reasons, their future has been uncertain. However, we are pleased to give you the following dates for this autumn.

11 and 25 September
9 and 23 October
13 and 27 November
11 December



A BOYHOOD IN BRANDON

BY BOB SMITH

Brandon was a wonderful place to grow up in the 1940s, surrounded by forest and heathland playgrounds with wild swimming and plentiful fishing in the Little Ouse. We kids spent most of our summer holidays on the banks of the river. In those days the banks were cattle meadows where cows grazed and buttercups grew in golden carpets and clusters.



Access was behind the Ram Hotel and the first glimpse of the river was at the Paddling Place. As the name suggests this was where the little ones paddled or tried to scoop up tiddlers and the slightly larger gudgeon in small hand nets. Looking back up the river were the lawns of the Bridge Hotel and Brandon Bridge. When I was young it was an old wooden bridge, with supports you could climb down and wedge yourself into for a spot of fishing. Now it is a modern flint bridge, safer I suppose and better suited to today's busy flow of traffic, but no spirit of adventure and not half as much fun.



A little further down was a spot called the Girl Guides. I don't know why. Perhaps girl guides had swum here or launched a boat from the small boathouse on the opposite bank. In any case the river here was a little wider and deeper and clear of weeds and this was where most people congregated to swim and picnic. This section during the hot days of summer was always full of kids splashing and watching families. I can remember my father swimming across the river with me on his back, virtually my first memory.

As we got older we moved down to the Staunch where a lock gate was built beside a weir. There we dived from the top of the staunch or slid on our bottoms down the waterfall slope of the weir. Now there is a green painted footbridge and safety rails all around the base structures. Again, much safer,

I suppose but very definitely not as much fun.

When it got too cold for swimming the river was perfect for fishing. Watching your coloured float bobbing could be a boring, shivering business, but when that float dived out of sight and you knew you had a bite it was all worth it. Mostly we caught red-finned roach or small silvery dace, but sometimes you could get a fat bream or a fighting perch. The real fishermen went for pike or eels, the only fish you could actually eat. I took my first brace of roach home and my dear mum dutifully cooked them for my tea. I dutifully ate them but they were horrible. Not matter how much tomato sauce you poured onto them they still tasted of mud.

Every Saturday afternoon we all went to the Avenue Cinema. It cost three pence for a ticket to watch Roy Rogers and Trigger, the Pathé News, a Donald Duck cartoon, and an episode of Flash Gordon. It was there I first saw John Wayne in Stagecoach and Alan Ladd as Shane. And who can forget Fay Wray screaming in grainy black and white as she writhed in the hairy fist of great King Kong?

We boys tumbled out of the cinema and rushed home to grab our guns or wooden swords. For the next week we would all be cowboys, or swordsmen of old Baghdad, depending on which film we had just watched. The next week the programme would change and we would all be cops and robbers or Tarzan of the Apes. Johnny Weismuller was the first Tarzan but when he got too fat he metamorphosed into a character called Jungle Jim. The old Avenue Cinema metamorphosed into a Bingo Hall but I'll bet it didn't have the same magic and excitement. Now, sadly, it has gone.

Our playgrounds were the woods and the fields. Today Rattlers Road has housing estates on either side, but in our day it was fields and allotments on the left and untamed heathland with gorse and blackberry bushes and tall beech trees to the right. One tree we called the Tarzan Tree; it was where we swung about like gleeful monkeys. We didn't need a council-approved climbing frame; the Tarzan Tree was higher and its lower branches were within jumping distance from the ground.

In those days I could climb every tree for miles around, and I knew the location of every bird's nest. Collecting birds' eggs was one of our hobbies and every search was an adventure. In those days we didn't know any better. One of my mates

even tamed a pet jackdaw and walked around with it perched on his shoulder.

We roamed the forests with bows and arrows. Hazel nut branches made good bows, and we raided a bamboo grove on the edge of somebody's garden for excellent light straight arrows. The woods were full of rotting tree stumps and each one was an enemy Indian. You couldn't get past until you had sunk an arrow with a satisfying thump into the rotten wood.

Every boy had a penknife but for us they were not offensive weapons. They were essential for cutting down bows and arrows and for whittling acorn pipes, pop guns, and wooden swords. X-boxes had not been invented and we made our own toys. Acorn pipes were a hollowed out acorn and pipe stem of hollowed out elder. We pinched cigarettes from our dads to break down into tobacco. I smoked one and was sick as a dog and have never smoked since.

Pop guns were a thicker branch of hollowed out elder. The soft pith came out easily. A hardwood ramrod was inserted in one end and an acorn jammed into the other. The ramrod end was burred over to make a smooth, tight fit. A good push and the acorn would be ejected with a loud pop at the enemy.

Back then what is now Brandon Park was private land, but that didn't stop us kids. We made regular expeditions to what for us was the lost temple in the jungle. Now I know that it is a small flint funerary chapel. The area around it has been cleared and it is now one of the park's visitor attractions. Approaching it now is totally different to creeping up silently in the forest gloom, eyes and ears alert for the first sound of a barking dog or any hostile human movement.



We lived by the seasons, football and snowballs in the winter, cricket, fishing, and swimming in the summer. Every August I went over to Lakenheath for a couple of weeks to ride my Uncle Jim's tractor and helped, or hindered, the bringing in of the harvest. In autumn we feasted on blackberries, hazel nuts, and chestnuts or played conkers with the uneatable horse variety. Our penknives always had a spike for getting stones out of horse's hooves. None of us ever dared to go near a horse's hoof, but that spike was good

for boring string holes in conkers.

There was even a season for marbles, although nobody ever knew what triggered it off. Suddenly the marbles appeared and every kid was shooting marbles down the side of the road. There was little traffic then. You could safely play marbles in the road. We even played cricket on the road, using a lamp post as the wicket.

We went, under protest, to school, where I became famous for shedding blots from those leaky old pens and inkwells. I loved reading, starting with Rupert Bear and Just William, moving up to Tarzan and everything else by Edgar Rice Burroughs. We all read comics: for the boys The Wizard, The Hotspur, and The Rover. My Uncle Jim bought me The Rover. My Aunt Gladys bought me The Beano. When I earned a bit of pocket money as an errand boy for the local chemist I bought myself The Champion and The Eagle.



Much later a friend went back to art classes at night school and told the teacher that I was now writing and publishing books and stories of my own. There was a pause while the teacher thought back to all those short-trousered urchins who had passed through his class and then he said in astonishment: "Not Smith-plus-ink-equals-a-mess?"

Finally I had to leave school. Job choice was limited. Brandon had a couple of rabbit skin factories and three sawmills. I got a job in one of the sawmills and worked there for two years as a sawyer's mate.

I got myself a dog, a second-hand mongrel named Sally. In my spare time we still roamed the woods. I would let Sally off the lead and spend the rest of the day trying to catch her to take her home.

Finally I got fed up and at seventeen I went to sea. I had to give Sally to a friend and that was a wrench. However, it was time to see the world, and to let the world see me. I joined the Merchant Navy and sailed on the Highland Brigade to South America.

My boyhood in Brandon was over. The world was my oyster.

The British Heart Foundation is inviting people to become involved in its Clinical Research Collaborative. If you are interested in being part of the research you can learn more at the BHF website: www.bhf.org.uk.

Join the National Clinical Research Database

Clinical research isn't just for clinicians or researchers – it takes a team, including patients, families, and service users. At BHF CRC, we see patients as partners in research. You can be involved at every stage, even from the very start of the process.

The National Clinical Research Database connects clinicians, academics, and industry with patients and families to promote wider research participation.

We're not recruiting patients for treatment but inviting those curious about research to explore opportunities. Whether you have experience or just some time to contribute, we welcome you!

Why Join?

- Learn about research and how you can help.
- Your info stays secure and is used only with your consent.
- No obligations – leave anytime.

Get Started

- Signing up is quick, easy, and free.
- Visit [our website](#) to register or learn more.
- Access the step-by-step [registration guide](#).

**Make a difference in
cardiovascular research today!**

BHF CRC
Clinical Research Collaborative